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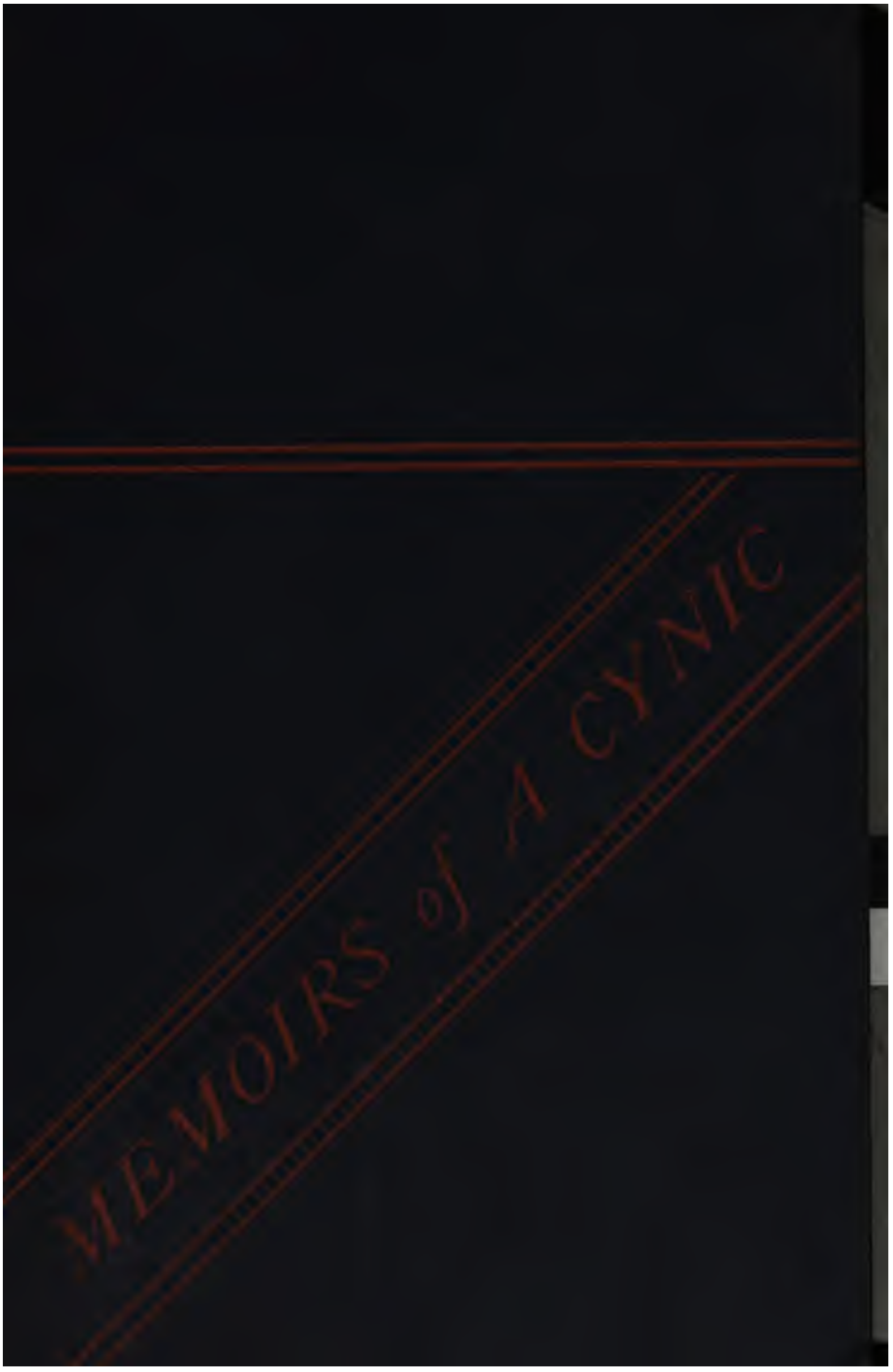
MEMOIRS of A CYNIC

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MEMOIRS OF A CYNIC.

EDITED BY

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MEMOIRS OF A CYNIC.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

On the evening of the sixtieth anniversary of my birthday, the labours of the day being over, according to custom I took up a book to amuse myself with a couple of hours' reading before retiring to bed. The work I had selected was the autobiography of Sir Thomas Bramston, K.B., a book attractive enough in itself, but which, on this occasion, did not claim my attention for more than a few minutes. Indeed, I had hardly finished the first paragraph before I had closed the book, to ruminate at my leisure over the train of thoughts it had conjured up. "Among the manie reason that historians give for the

resignation of the Emperor Charles the Fifth," the paragraph said, "the words of an old and good officer under him are not of the lightest moment, whoe, desiring leave of the Emperor to depart and be dismist from his employment, the Emperor would needes know the reason moveinge him thereto, whoe replied, *Inter negotia vitæ et horam mortis debit esse spatium.*"

This sentence impressed me all the more, as I had been for some time reflecting whether I had not arrived at that age when a man, without incurring the stigma of idleness, may legitimately retire from active employment, and spend the remainder of his days in peace and quietude. The reply of the old officer seemed to confirm me in the conclusion I had already partly arrived at, that I might reasonably do so; and before seeking my bed that evening I determined to act upon it.

Should the reader consider that with a sound mind and good constitution I was not justified in devoting the remainder of my days to unprofitable ease, I beg, in reply, to submit that there were several extenuating circumstances in my case. In the first place I am unfortunately an old bachelor. I advisedly make use of the word

"unfortunately," for Heaven knows I would willingly have married. The cause of my disappointment and my continued celibacy I will relate hereafter. Moreover, I have no relatives, and but few friends; without being rich, I have acquired sufficient to live during the rest of my life, if not with splendour, at least with ease, and at my death shall be able to leave something behind me, if not for the good of my own soul, at least for the worldly comfort and consolation of the sick and afflicted. Perhaps I may be able to leave, too, some solid memorials of my gratitude to those to whom I am under obligation, although, I am sorry to say, of these last there are but few now living.

Unfortunately my retirement from the active duties of life was not altogether attended with the results I had anticipated. Instead of enjoying my *otium cum dignitate* I experienced a far less classical result, and found myself mortally *ennuied*. This feeling gradually increased to such an extent that, at last, I found it absolutely necessary to seek for some rational occupation for my mind, for utter inactivity began to have a most prejudicial effect on my nervous system. Nor, considering the active

life I had previously led, was this much to be wondered at, for during the sixty years of my existence I had not only played many more parts than those mentioned by Shakespeare, but the harsh rebuffs and vicissitudes I met with would contrast strangely with the comparatively natural, commonplace continuity of human life which he describes in his Seven Ages. Apart from the school-boy, "with satchel at his back, creeping like a snail unwillingly to school, and the lover with a ballad tacked to his mistress' eyebrows," all resemblance between us ends. Apart from the episode of the soldier, "full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard," Shakespeare's type of man's life, as drawn by him in the description alluded to, appears to have been that of an ordinary country gentleman in good circumstances of his day, while I have had many abrupt changes, from happiness to sorrow, from ease and idleness to severe exertion, from comparative wealth to absolute poverty, and that of so profound a description as to induce me at one time to entertain the idea of self-destruction; and then, again, if not to be a rich man, at least to be possessed of sufficient to supply me not only with the necessaries but the

luxuries of life. Although the first half of my existence, with the exception of some eighteen months when I was a sailor, was passed in a somewhat intellectual sort of idleness, the latter half has been industriously employed, and that in the occupation, above all others, most likely to compel an old man, who had determined to dedicate the rest of his days to ease and quietude, to betake himself again to some mental exertion, to relieve the dull monotony of stagnant life—that of a journalist.

If the first thirty years of my life were passed in comparative idleness, or at least unremunerative employment, certainly it was not so with the remainder. During the whole of the time I have been a writer for the public press,—and few men in that occupation have been more industrious. I have passed through almost every phase of the profession. I first wrote theatrical reports (always a favourite occupation of mine) for a Sunday paper. My knowledge of Italian and music afterwards obtained for me the appointment of musical and operatic critic to a fashionable morning paper; and then I was admitted as reporter into the gallery of the House of Commons. I have also, on two occasions,

been a special war correspondent. Getting older, I turned my mind to writing leading articles, occasionally using my pen in other branches of literature. According to time-hallowed custom I ought perhaps here to state that my services had been underpaid; but, conscientiously speaking, this is not the case. On the contrary, I have always been fairly remunerated; and if I have not contrived to amass a fortune, at least I have been able to live in comfort.

When I was a young man press-writing was a very different affair from what it is at the present day. Gross personality then passed for wit, and vulgar abuse for sarcasm. At the same time this state of things was not without its excuse. The touch of the gentler good-humoured sarcasm of the present day would not have been felt by the thick-skinned gentry for whose reformation it was then especially intended. Among all classes it was the same. The last of the Georges was then on the throne, and the abuses in every grade of society or public department, whether army, navy, pulpit, bar, or stage, were, according to our present views of right and wrong, perfectly astounding. Notwithstanding all the stereotyped cant about the high independent

feeling of the British nation, I believe things would be in as bad a state to-day, had it not been for the incessant Herculean labours of the public press. Do not imagine, however, that the journalist's task was simply to point out an abuse, and that the nation immediately eradicated it, for that was far from being the case. Day after day, week after week, year after year, did the press point out to the nation the horrible despotism they were subjected to before the public would stir in the matter.

The enormous injustice and abuse which were then common in ecclesiastical affairs, seem now almost incredible. With one exception, the whole bench of bishops were advocates for negro slavery, and defended that "peculiar institution" so warmly, that Lord Eldon argued that there was nothing in it contrary to the principles of Christianity, or the reverend lords would not have supported it in the consistent manner they did. I remember two bishops being pointed out to me who had received their mitres from our English Pope, George the Fourth, while Regent, through the direct patronage of Court ladies of very indifferent reputation. One archbishop had accumulated so great a fortune

from his see, that he was enabled on one new year's day to present each of his grandchildren, fifty-two in number, with one thousand pounds, and that with little perceptible diminution of his fortune. Another bishop had given to different members of his family church livings to the amount of thirty-two thousand a year, without exciting the slightest scandal or disapprobation in the mind of the pure head of the only true church, by Act of Parliament established, that most religious and gracious King, George the Fourth. Another bishop lived for many years abroad in the house of a woman of disgraceful reputation. All his revenues, which were immense, he spent away from England, neglecting, with perfect impunity, the whole care of his diocese.

It required no little courage, I can assure you, on the part of the press to attack the abuses of the Church alone. A tacit understanding seemed to exist between it and the Law to allow these infamies to be carried on unchallenged. The Law legalised every injustice committed by the Church on condition that it had its share in the patronage; and the Church sanctified and absolved every legal infamy, provided it had for one of its ob-

jects the welfare of the Church temporalities; while the Crown stepped in and gave its sanction to both, thus forming a trinity of scandal which could not have been surpassed for bare-faced injustice and wickedness in the worst era of the Roman Catholic Church. That things in the Church are vastly changed for the better I am perfectly ready to admit; still, even in late years, the world has witnessed acts perpetrated with impunity, if not with praise, which future generation may stigmatise as infamous. For the welfare of the rich we have seen, in this capital city of ours, Christ's legatees—the poor—robbed of their inheritance, and the vast sums left for their education applied to the benefit of those who are perfectly able to pay for the advantages they receive. And all this is not only legalised by the law, but not unfrequently the very acts of spoliation themselves are blessed by our Church dignitaries.

In the law, army, and navy, abuses existed scarcely less enormous than those in the Church. Still, the press went on, and, to a considerable extent, conquered, in spite of the continued threats, on the part of the law, of severe punishment in this world, and on the part of the Church

of eternal perdition in the next. And yet all the time those at the head of these abuses called themselves the most virtuous and respectable portion of the nation; and the rest believed them, and appeared almost to idolize them for the very impudence of the falsehoods they uttered.

Although my connection with the public press had, during the last thirty years of my life, been the means, to a very considerable extent, at any rate, of providing me with the means of existence in comfort, luxury, and respectability, it had at the same time a somewhat prejudicial effect on my temper and habits of thought. From my earliest childhood, the sublime and the ridiculous were incessantly presenting themselves to my imagination, frequently mixed up together in the most absurd and incongruous manner, and my connexion with the public press had the effect of heightening it to such a degree, that at length it resolved itself into direct cynicism, though, I trust, without to any appreciable extent making me either morose, uncharitable, or ill-tempered. And this feeling, after I had retired from public life, instead of diminishing, increased, and that frequently to a degree that put me out of humour with myself. Nor was the cause of this increase

difficult to account for. When in full occupation my mind was so intently absorbed on the work before me, that I had but comparatively little time to notice the absurdities which came in my way. When without occupation they were perpetually presenting themselves before me, and frequently to my great annoyance. At length, this habit, which I found was insensibly creeping over me with increasing power, combined with my enforced idleness, at last became so oppressive that I determined by a vigorous effort to rid myself of it, and forthwith looked about me for the means. In this, at first, I had some difficulty, and I tried several different schemes to vigorously occupy my mind, though with scant success. At length, like Gil Blas' poet, who, tired of poetry, occupied himself in writing a long address to the Muses in verse, I, an old hack writer, tired of authorship and journalism, determined to relieve my mind by writing a book, and one, if possible, of a totally original character.

Although I had easily determined that my contemplated work should be perfectly original, both in design and character, my intentions were by no means so easily carried out. Day after

day, and week after week, did I attempt to discover one perfectly original subject which I could work up into an interesting form, but without success. I found that every plot I invented had been done before, and every new thing I started, even though on my part conscientiously original, had been used by some one before me. Still I was not a man to be dismayed by difficulties; on the contrary, my natural disposition was rather stimulated by them than otherwise. I still continued my search, in spite of the apparent impossibility of success, when an idea crossed my mind which almost induced me to throw over the attempt altogether. I remembered that a donkey is said to pull a load up hill better than any other animal, not because he is fond of hard work, but that he feels as if something was attempting to draw him back, and for that reason alone he will go forwards. I now began to draw the similitude between the donkey and his load, and the task I had in hand, and so unflattering did my asinine determination appear that I resolved to abandon my search after the original, and content myself with any other subject which might please me, even at the risk of the plan or idea having been thought of before.

No sooner, however, had I determined to abandon my search after the original, than what I believe to be a perfectly original idea presented itself before me. It was to write a "Predicted History of England" from the passing of the Reform and Catholic Emancipation Bills to the present time. I now collected an immense number of predictions of what would be the fate of England if certain measures at different times before the Houses of Parliament were passed in law. I soon, however, gave up the attempt. The work was amusing enough at the beginning, and afforded considerable facilities for pointed satire; but as I went on, so many different elements of difficulty presented themselves, and these of so contradictory a description, that I was obliged to relinquish my task in despair. Every new project brought forward in Parliament I found contained, as was predicted by the proposer, the elements of infinite good to the nation, no matter whether in foreign policy or home legislation, while the Opposition discovered in it the most destructive and prejudicial effects if carried into execution. Connected with the two Acts of Parliament, the Reform Bill and Catholic Emancipation, predictions of the most alarming

character were showered forth by the Tories. Before the end of the first two years of my history I had accumulated no fewer than seventy-nine "saps in the very foundation of the British Constitution in Church and State," and all these pointed out by legislators, noblemen, and other authorities of the most profound wisdom. The evils likely to fall on the nation went on accumulating till I could plainly perceive that before the end of ten years the whole country would be annihilated, or all that would remain of it would be the City of London in a proper state of dilapidation for the reception of the New Zealander, whose advent has been so often and so loudly proclaimed. So insurmountable, in fact, were the difficulties which presented themselves, that I abandoned the idea in despair, and all that remains of my labours are a manuscript collection of predictions uttered by eminent statesmen, divines, chancellors, and judges, all of whom were imagined at the time to be oracles of little less than infallible wisdom. What I shall do with this collection of utter absurdities I know not. Perhaps, after all, I may, in a charitable fit, destroy them rather than leave behind me so many testimonials of the nonsense uttered by

those whom we considered worthy of all honour for their sagacity and integrity.

After throwing aside all intention of continuing my "Predicted History of England" I travelled abroad for some months, visiting places, especially in Italy, with which I had been familiar in my younger days, conjuring up reminiscences both pleasurable and painful, thus rationally directing or rather occupying my mind, instead of allowing it to be dormant, or rather to feed upon itself, for mental inactivity with me was an impossibility. Then I returned to London, but no sooner did I arrive there than my old wish to resume my pen and write, if possible, a work of an original character again seized me. But then arose the difficult question of novelty in its construction, and so formidable did it appear that at length I almost again gave over the attempt in despair. One morning, however, when looking over some old papers, my eye fell on a number of newspaper criticisms I had collected on a work I had published some ten years before, * in which, among other kind expressions, was that of the originality in the design and method of

* "Shirley Hall Asylum; or, the Memoirs of a Monomaniac."

treatment. The book was principally made of a number of sketches of persons who in many cases could not be justly termed lunatics, but who were labouring under either an innocent monomania or a strongly developed crotchet which much resembled it. Of these sketches none were so much praised for its originality as that entitled the Cynic, hardly any reviewer failing to notice it. The incidents it contained were taken from life, some which occurred to myself when a boy, the rest from a relative of mine who, from too much brain-work, stimulated to an unnatural extent by too frequent application to the bottle, had been obliged to retire into an asylum for a few months to restore the tone of his mind.

After, for some time, reading these notices with considerable interest, I was on the point of putting them aside when the idea struck me whether I could not publish my own autobiography, something on the plan of the "Cynic" alluded to. The idea then expressed in some half-dozen pages was considered an original one, why then should the book be less so? If the sketch was interesting why should the work itself be less so, for the materials it would con-

tain would be equally varied and novel. At last the idea found so much favour in my eyes that I decided on commencing my autobiography. I determined, after mature deliberation, to divide it into two parts—the first twenty-five years, or idle portion of my life, forming the one, the time I was engaged on the public press the other. In the former my experiences of life were of the gayer description; the latter, as a rule, the more serious, though in both many exceptions occurred. Frequently pathetic episodes would mix themselves up with the ridiculous in my earlier years; and in my later, the absurd would often mingle with the serious. Whether the whole, when finished, may be approved I must leave to the reader to decide.

CHAPTER II.

MY CHILDHOOD.

ALTHOUGH in the last chapter I admitted that I am of a cynical disposition, I must say, however, that I believe it to have been far more the effect of education than any natural tendency. I might almost insist that there are few of a more serious temperament than I am, or who can dwell with greater interest on the pathetic. From my earliest childhood, however, the "ridiculous" has thrust itself into every action of my life, frequently in direct opposition to my will. I have been haunted through my whole existence by the absurd, and that without the slightest power on my own part to avoid it. Even in religious matters I can detect the same tendency. I have ever maintained the greatest respect for

religion and its ministers, and yet with some of my earliest notions of a Deity, the ridiculous is to a greater or less extent mixed up. It may appear singular to the reader that with such a habit of thought even on serious matters, that I am possessed of any religious feeling, and I should almost be inclined to doubt it myself were I not able to recall my very first conception of the Deity, and that is so pure and beautiful, to my imagination at least, that I am convinced the good seed took root in me however much the tree itself may have deteriorated. With my first idea of a God not the slightest particle of the ridiculous is mixed. Nay more, it is the earliest circumstance I can remember, and the greater portion of it is at present as vividly painted on my memory as at the time it occurred I must then have been about seven years of age, as my mother, who died two years before my father, was then in her last illness. I had been guilty of some infantile peccadillo — possibly appropriating some delicacy to my own use, to which I was not entitled. But of one thing I am certain, that when accused of my crime I stoutly and unhesitatingly denied it. The evidence against me, however, was overwhelming,

and I was brought up before my poor mother for judgment. I can see her now before me as she sat up in bed, supported by pillows, calmly remonstrating with me on the wickedness of a lie, and showing me God's anger at a sin of the kind. As I remained obstinate, however, under her admonitions, she placed me at the foot of the bed as a punishment, where I was to remain till I came to a better frame of mind. In a few minutes this occurred: I burst into tears and ran round to the side of the bed, begging her forgiveness. She, in return, clasped me in her arms and kissed me, and wept scarcely less plentifully than I did myself.

This was the last reminiscence I had of my mother, for I do not think I ever saw her again. In that one interview, however, I had thoroughly conceived the possibility of the existence of a being who could love fondly, and at the same time punish. I have since, in reflecting on this power of a mother over her child, and in watching its effects on other children, come to the conclusion that not only had I received from my mother a knowledge of the two attributes of the Deity already mentioned, but that I had also received from her the idea of Omnipotence—

a power that could protect me from all evil; of Omniscience—for I believed she knew all; and faith—for I could not have doubted a word she told me, no matter how abstruse the theology concealed in the childish question I might have put to her.

After the death of my mother, I and my brother, two years my junior, were placed under the care of my paternal grandmother. And here, unlike the pure theology I had obtained from my mother, the absurd began to mix itself up with my ideas; not at the time, certainly, for I was merely puzzled by her arguments, but when I grew older and was better able to analyse them. My grandmother was an exceedingly spiteful old woman, and yet proud of her piety. I believe if I had placed the same faith in her as I had done in my mother, I should have been about as cruel and vindictive a character as it would be possible to imagine. Her ideas of resignation were singular in the extreme. No person ever offended her that she did not use every means in her power to seek retaliation. If she were unable to obtain any, she had one "pious" remark ready for the occasion—"No matter, my dear, they will suffer for it hereafter,

that's one blessing." She was particularly fond of applying Scripture or theological arguments, even to the commonest events of life. The Church Catechism of course was instilled into us. It was, in her idea, more essential to salvation than even the Scriptures themselves. Oh! how fearfully were my brother and I punished if we had not learnt a certain portion of it every day.

Moreover, she had an abominable habit of examining us on the meaning of the questions and answers, and severe indeed were the punishments we received if our replies were not satisfactory. When my poor brother was between five and six years of age, I remember his being called up for his first examination on the Catechism. After replying correctly enough to the first question, he broke down at the second. When asked, "Who gave you that name?" his reply was "My Godfathers and my Godmothers in my baptism, wherein I——"

"Stop," said my grandmother; "do you know what is meant by your baptism?"

"Yes," said my brother.

"Explain it," said the old lady.

Laying his hand on the pit of his stomach he

looked in her face and said: "This is my baptism."

I forget what punishment she inflicted on him, but if it was not a severe one, out of all proportion with his fault, it was the only one she ever awarded us that was not.

What makes the old lady's behaviour appear still more atrocious, was the way in which she used to escape from difficult theological questions we put to her. And here I may state that children occasionally do put theological questions that would puzzle far greater authorities than my old grandmother to answer. Her usual reply to all questions she found difficult was: "By faith, my dear." Nor was this solely confined to questions or discourses on theological subjects. She would occasionally bring it in on others purely mundane when she had any difficulty in replying, for she insisted on the ultramontane infallibility of her own wisdom. I remember once, when nearly eight years of age, reading to her in Goldsmith's "Roman History," about one of the mythical kings of Rome who had a difference of opinion with an augur. To a statement of the augur the king replied—

"Why, you might as well tell me that I could cut through this whetstone with a razor."

"Cut boldly," replied the augur. And the king cut it through accordingly.

"How did he do that, grandmamma?" I asked.

"By faith, my dear," said the old lady.

But after all, even in the present day, half a century later, with the many modifications and improvements which have taken place in the spiritual instruction of children, occasionally circumstances crop up which prove that if the word "faith" is not brought forward with the same frequency as it was by my grandmother, other words scarcely less inappropriate are used. Not long since, shortly after the illness of the Prince of Wales, I entered, with the ladies of a family I was visiting in ——shire, a National School, in which my hostess took an especial pride, and of which she was one of the best patronesses. By way of proving the excellency of the instruction taught in it she requested the teacher to give me some examples of the ability of the children. The teacher, nothing loth, ranged them on the rising forms one above another till all were in their places. Some of the usual questions were then put by the teacher, and the children, who of course had answered

them fifty times before, gave their replies in a perfectly satisfactory manner. My hostess was then asked if she would like to put some questions to them. This she readily did, and being naturally of a most patriotic temperament, she asked,—

"Why should we love the Prince of Wales?"

The whole of the children for some moments seemed perfectly incapable of replying. The teacher, alarmed for the credit of the school, then addressed the children seriously, telling them they ought to think over the question, and that those who considered themselves capable of answering were to hold up their hands. After a minute's silence three of them extended their arms to signify that they were prepared with replies.

"Tommy," she said, addressing a chubby-faced little boy; "you answer first, 'Why should we love the Prince of Wales?'"

"Because he was good, and took his physic, and got well," was the reply, with a tone of assurance which seemed to say, "deny that if you can."

To his great astonishment, however, this reply did not satisfy the teacher, and she then put the

question to the next pupil. The boy remained silent and perplexed for some moments, and then said,—

"Please teacher, I forget."

"Mary, my dear," said the teacher, addressing a prim little girl; "Why should we love the Prince of Wales?"

"By prayer," replied Mary, with a sanctity and solemnity of tone which seemed to reprobate the behaviour of her two male fellow-pupils.

I could quote examples of the kinds by hundreds, though possibly not one I might mention would be more absurd than different instances which have come under the reader's own notice, all tending to show how imperfectly are the beautiful principles of the Christian religion instilled into the minds of children by the incapacity of their teachers. One instance, however, I cannot refrain from quoting, so perfect of its kind does it appear to me. I one day visited for the purpose of collecting information for a newspaper article, the magnificent Reformatory Schools for Criminal Boys, at ——. So admirable were all the arrangements connected with the establishment that I at first imagined it would be impossible to find anything in it either to blame or

ridicule, or that the absurd could in any manner be mixed up with it. However, even there I found in one instance the sublime and the ridiculous mingled in an extraordinary manner with the theological. In making a tour of the building with the chaplain, he noticed that a certain pupil was absent from the workshops, and on making inquiries respecting him, was informed that he had been rebellious at work that morning, and as a punishment had been, by order of the Governor, placed in a solitary cell for the remainder of the day. The Governor had left word with the superintendent of the workshop that when the chaplain should make his usual round, his attention should be called to the subject, so that he might reason with the boy on the impropriety of his conduct. On leaving the workshop the chaplain said to me,—

"If you have no objection we will see the boy at once, and then you will be able to judge of the nature of our punishments, and see that they are rather moral than physical."

Accompanied by the warder we now entered a corridor, and a door being opened we saw in a cell a boy of perhaps thirteen years of age, who appeared as truculent a little monkey as could well

be imagined. After all, perhaps, it was less the fault of the poor child than the life he had been compelled to lead. Possibly the only instruction he had received before his entrance into the school had been to "move on," for the chaplain told me he was, on his arrival, as ignorant as the beasts of the field, and hardly aware of the common decencies of life. He scowled at us as we entered the cell, but remained silent.

"So I hear," said the chaplain, "you have been a naughty boy again this morning, and have refused to obey the orders of the superintendent of the workshop. Nor is this the first time you have been guilty of such faults. Nobody wishes to be unkind to you or to punish you, but discipline must be maintained. Now promise me you will behave better for the future, and thus relieve us from the necessity of punishing you, which I assure you we do with great pain."

The worthy chaplain's tone, more perhaps than even his word, seemed to have a wonderful effect on the child. His sulky look vanished, and he began to cry.

"Now tell me," said the chaplain, "why are you so naughty?"

"I can't help it, sir," he replied. "It's not my fault."

"Whose fault is it, then?" asked the chaplain.

"It's my original sin, sir," replied the boy.

"Your original sin!" said the chaplain. "Nonsense; what do you mean by that? You do not know what you are talking about."

"Yes, sir," said the boy; "it's my original sin, and it breaks out all over me, legs and all."

So saying, he pulled up his trousers and showed us a strong cutaneous eruption on the legs, which had doubtless made the poor child fractious. He evidently, by way of accounting to himself for his mutinous behaviour, had collected together some scraps of the theological teaching he had received, and condensed them into the conclusion that it was his original sin which had caused the painful eruption on his legs, thus compelling him to be mutinous against his own inclination.

To return to my own adventures. My brother and I continued our unhappy life with our grandmother for nearly two years. In the day time we attended a small school in the neighbourhood,

spending our evenings and mornings at home. School hours have generally but little attraction for children of our age, but with us it was different, for so unattractive was home, we found the schoolroom preferable. Things went on in this manner till at the end of the two years a circumstance occurred which greatly shocked me, and was the cause of my altering, to a considerable degree, the dislike I had taken to my grandmother.

At the time of my mother's death my father was suffering from ill health. The shock her decease caused him increased his malady, and very serious symptoms began to develop themselves. Physicians of the first eminence were called in, who said he must leave England immediately or consumption would supervene. This for him was not so great a difficulty as might have been imagined. He was a junior partner in a large wholesale wine-merchants' house carrying on an extensive business in Madeira. It was now decided that he should visit that island, and remain there in connection with the firm for twelve months. And this was the immediate cause of our being placed under the care of our grandmother. The year passed on, and the reports we

received of his health were of a somewhat favourable character. Still, the progress he had made was so small that it was considered advisable he should remain another year. Alas! the favourable promise held out at the end of the first year was not realized. Six months afterwards we were informed that a relapse had taken place, and serious symptoms had appeared which gave great cause for anxiety. The following month my grandmother received a letter from him, stating that, as he was now assured his malady was incurable, he proposed returning to England that he might die in the midst of his family. This intelligence was a source of great sorrow to my grandmother, and indeed to us all, although scarcely as much to my brother and myself as might have been expected. We knew, in fact, but little of him, as we were too young at the time of his leaving England to have any very great knowledge of his good qualities, and the letters we had received from him hardly conveyed a favourable impression to our minds, for they all spoke in high terms of our grandmother, and contained numerous injunctions that we should obey her in every respect. If they contained anything else she withheld it from us.

It was now time for my father's arrival in England, and yet we received no intelligence of him. My grandmother's uneasiness at the delay became so great that she positively forgot to maintain her severe discipline over us. Nay, more, she even went so far as to show us more kindness than she had ever yet done—and that, after all, was little indeed. At length a letter reached her, written in an unknown hand, and dated from Southampton. It was from the agent of the ship, and stated that it was with great regret he had to inform her that my father had died during the voyage to England, and that his body had been committed to the deep. I was in the room when my grandmother read this letter. The first effect it had on her was to bring on a half-fainting fit, from which she recovered, and then went into violent hysterics. Her screams brought the servants into the room, and I was then sent out. It was long before she recovered from the fit—her sorrow, I believe, continued unabated till her death. I remember the effect she produced on me the evening she received this letter. She was walking to and fro in the parlour, her hands clasped together, the tears coursing each other rapidly down her face, while she ejaculated from

time to time, "My God, my God, what shall I do!" From that moment to the present, when my mind reverts to the old lady, this last scene starts forward, and completely neutralises in my mind all the anger and aversion her despotic conduct had engendered in my breast.

CHAPTER III.

MY NEW GUARDIAN.

My grandmother was so overwhelmed with grief at the loss of her son, that she resolved on relinquishing our superintendence. Possibly this determination was in part arrived at from the fact that my father had left his elder half-brother executor to his will, as well as our guardian. But little good feeling existed between him and my grandmother, he being the child of my grandfathers first wife, whom she had cordially detested. My uncle was considerably older than my father, at least fourteen or fifteen years. I forget now what employment he held, but I think it was secretary in some office or bank, the business of which was carried on on the ground-floor, while we occupied the whole of the upper portion of

the house. My uncle was a reserved, taciturn man, and very undemonstrative. He took personally but little notice of us, leaving us to the care of the housekeeper. If we had received too much supervision from my grandmother, we certainly had little enough now. True, my uncle never treated us with any harshness, but seemed totally indifferent to anything connected with us, so long as we did not interfere with his comfort and convenience. He had been a widower for some years, and was childless, which possibly might, to a certain extent, account for the apathy he certainly held us in.

We had no friends of our own age, and indeed, the only acquaintance we had was the housekeeper. The situation we lived in was not one which allowed us much opportunity for out-door exercise. Our house was on the Surrey side of Blackfriars Bridge, standing some way apart from the high road, and has since been destroyed for the Blackfriars terminus of the Dover railway. The principal occupation we had at home was in a library of books (in other respects our education was utterly neglected); our greatest amusement, a treat to the pit of the theatre, always accompanied on these occasions by the housekeeper,

for my uncle took no pleasure in theatrical performances.

Our life during the first six months we lived under my uncle's roof was peculiarly sad. My brother and I used to pass whole hours together in the back drawing-room, amusing ourselves with the books we there found; my uncle either below in the office, or in some other part of the house. Among the books we especially delighted in were "Pilgrim's Progress" and "Josephus." The former had particular attractions for us, not only from the poetry of the book, but from the plates with which it was illustrated. Over and over again did my poor brother and I wade through that allegory, and so strong was the impression the book created, that even at the present time I can recall to mind the figures in the plates, as well as the quaint letters in the headings of some of the chapters.

One evening, after having been reading the whole afternoon in our favourite book, my brother and I, when we closed it, began to talk over the adventures it contained. Of course our favourite characters were Christian and Faithful. We cared little for Mr. Steadfast-in-the-Faith and other amiable personages, and

despising with great earnestness Mr. Hold-to-the-World, Mr. Love-the-Flesh, Mrs. Bats'-Eyes, and other objectionable individuals At last we came to Vanity Fair, and discoursed together for some time on the hubbub produced in it by the strange answer of Christian and Faithful. We began to consider what would be the effect in an English fair if they had passed through it replying to every person who said "What'll you buy? what'll you buy?"—"We buy the Truth." There was some difference of opinion between us on the subject, whether they would be ill-treated or otherwise. At last I suggested we should at once try the experiment. True, there was no fair handy, but a short distance from the northern side of the Bridge was old Fleet Market, which a few years afterwards was removed. It was then Saturday evening, the market was at the fullest, and consequently a good opportunity presented itself for the experiment to be tried. My poor brother and I left the house, it being determined that I should assume the part of Christian, and he that of Faithful.

As soon as we arrived at the market, we each adopted our characters, regulating our walk at a

steady pace, and with a seriousness on our countenances befitting the occasion. "What'll you buy? what'll you buy?" was being said on all sides, and each time we heard it we replied, "We buy the Truth." Onwards we went, but so little notice was taken of us that I, at any rate, began to suspect that Christian's statement of the effects produced must have been somewhat exaggerated. At length a circumstance took place which gave us great encouragement. A butcher's man, who was sharpening his knife on the steel as we passed, said, "What'll you buy? what'll you buy?" We both answered steadily and solemnly, "We buy the Truth." The man seemed considerably annoyed, and was moving towards us when a customer came up to his stall, so he contented himself with merely calling us a couple of little fools. We were rather vexed at the customer interrupting the affair, but we considered it as hopeful, and went on.

Nothing occurred for a little time, when on passing one of the stalls the same question met our ears, and we returned the same answer. An infidel greengrocer's-boy then threw a cabbage stump at me, which struck me so violently on the head it nearly knocked me down. Casting

aside the meek and gentle character of Christian which I had assumed, I rushed at him, and a desperate fight ensued between us, in which, I must admit, I was far from coming off conqueror; on the contrary, I was very severely punished.

We now returned homewards, my face covered with blood. A singular change had also come over my demeanour. I no longer bought the "Truth," and, in fact, thought nothing more about it, being too much occupied with the blood which was trickling down on my dress, and fearing the animadversions which my uncle might make on the subject. Fortunately the streets of London were at that time by no means so well lighted as they are at present, so we excited very little attention on our road home.

The next day (Sunday), I found my nose was very considerably swollen, and I had also a black eye. Of course it was no use attempting to disguise it from my uncle, so when he asked me how it had occurred, I told him I had had a fight with a boy in Fleet Market the night before, and had got the worst of it. My uncle merely shrugged his shoulders, and the subject dropped. From that time I took a great dislike

to "The Pilgrim's Progress," and I remember one afternoon, when my brother proposed we should read it, saying I was tired of it, and knew it all by heart. He gave, however, a shrewd guess at the truth, that it was the result of my fight, and not that I was actuated by any valid objection to the book. He endeavoured to console me, and remarked that on a future occasion I might be better able to keep my temper. I candidly admitted I was unable to support a character of the kind, and that I was sorry for it, but it was no use attempting it again. He argued that possibly mine was an exceptional case; and that in Bunyan's book nothing was said about cabbage stumps in Vanity Fair. However, I considered his argument as mere sophistry, and the matter dropped.

Although my uncle appeared to take no interest in the punishment I had received, I very much suspect it induced him to engage another housekeeper who would superintend us better, so that a mischance of the kind might not occur again. At any rate Martha came on duty a short time afterwards.

Our new superintendent was a good-natured, respectable woman, about forty years of age,

and a relative of the one whose place she supplied, who was infirm and ill-tempered. Martha was very kind to us, and in our walks (we were now prohibited to go out alone) she would take us anywhere we liked. As a proof of her good nature I may mention that our favourite walk was to Billingsgate; and it must be understood that Billingsgate presented a very different appearance then to what it does now. Altogether it would be impossible to imagine a more dirty or unattractive promenade. Whether we crossed the bridge and went by Thames Street or through the dirty slums of Southwark, it was equally objectionable. When arrived at the locality itself, those accustomed to the present cleanly condition of the place, and the noble buildings around it, could hardly form an opinion of the degraded state it was then in. There were the attributes, however, which in my eyes, redeemed it from all its other objectionable qualities. There was a smell of tar perceptible during the whole of the way, strongly suggestive of the sea, which increased in intensity till we had reached Billingsgate, forming a fitting prelude to the bustling scene of boats, and Gravesend and Margate packets, Billingsgate

being at that time the embarking port for the latter. And it was here perhaps that I first conceived the strong desire, afterwards gratified, to become a sailor.

It was while under Martha's care that my feelings of romance experienced their first shock. However, unlike my experience of "Pilgrim's Progress," the catastrophe, so far from curing me of my liking, the cause of it has been dear to me through the whole of my existence, even at the present day. It arose from my belief in the reality of theatrical illusions. At the time I am speaking of, I might have been between eight and nine years of age. Martha had some acquaintance with a person employed at the Surrey Theatre, and through his patronage she occasionally obtained orders for the pit, when my brother and I generally accompanied her.

One piece, which I saw several times, used to make a great impression on me. I forget the name of it, but it struck me [illegible] exceedingly grand and magnifice[illegible]tion rather increased than di[illegible] the oftener. I ev[illegible] and admirati[illegible]d the princi[illegible] was to

me an especial object of interest. She was the benevolent power of the piece—a just and magnificent queen. Her virtues in my eyes, were very possibly increased by her personal appearance. She was a tall, portly, handsome woman, with a sweet clear voice. I remember also that she had a beautiful set of teeth; indeed she would not have been to blame had I forgotten the circumstance, for she took every possible opportunity of showing them to their fullest extent. No matter what sentence she might be giving utterance to, whether tragic or comic, laughing or weeping, jesting or scolding, her teeth were always to be seen. Her dress also contributed greatly to the respect I bore her, it was as magnificent as stage velvet and Dutch metal could make it, and the crown she wore the queen of the Indies might have envied.

The splendour and majesty of this woman fairly haunted me, till one day the illusion vanished. I was walking one fine sunshiny morning with [illegible] poor street at the back of the present [illegible]spital, which was then building. [illegible]he moment passing a row of small [illegible] houses, with little gardens in front [illegible]om each other and the road by short,

rickety wooden palings. From one of the houses emerged a tall shabbily-dressed old woman, with a basket on her arm. She took the same direction as ourselves, but, as we had not reached her when she left the garden-gate, we, of course followed her. Suddenly the door of the same house opened again, and a slatternly slip-shod, dirty little girl rushed out of it after the old woman, screaming at the top of her voice, "grandmother, we want butter." The old woman, hearing the child's voice, turned round, and I had a full view of her features. They were perfectly well known to me, but I could not at the moment remember where I had seen them.

"That's Mrs. B——, the queen in the piece you saw last night, at the theatre," Martha whispered to me.

I was thunderstruck. At first I believed it to be impossible; but a second glance at the poverty-struck creature proved it to be a fact. That shabby, sharp-voiced old woman was the mild-toned, magnificent queen of the evening before.

If the foregoing occurrence had not been sufficient to dispel some of my romance respecting

theatrical representations, a circumstance afterwards occurred which fully confirmed it. It took place when I was between ten and eleven years of age. My uncle had placed me at a day-school in the neighbourhood, to which I went every morning and returned in the evening. My poor brother had now left me. He was exceedingly unwell, and had been placed under the charge of a respectable woman, a relative of Martha's, who resided at Hastings. I believe the happiest hours of my childhood I passed when at that school; not that there was anything particularly attractive in my daily routine, but my life at home was exceedingly monotonous and solitary. At school, at any rate, I had companions; at home I had now none, with the exception of Martha, and a mongrel terrier of the name of Rover. My holidays were particularly desolate, for I had no acquaintances, my uncle not allowing me to receive any of my school-fellows at home; and I had too much pride to visit at the houses of others when I could not offer them any return.

Occasionally, it is true, I still had a treat to the theatre, Martha's acquaintance, of whom I have already spoken, continuing to hold his appointment, although the manager had removed

him to the Lyceum Theatre. A piece at that time was performing there which had great attractions for the public. It was called "The Dog of Montargis; or, The Forest of Bondy."

It had such an effect on me that, although some fifty years have passed over my head since I saw it, I think I could now repeat everything which took place in it on the stage. Let me be clearly understood. The human performers in the piece did not possess the charm for me which would have been experienced by most boys of my age, for the broken illusion I have already mentioned had taught me how much deception was before me. But there was one, in fact the hero of the piece, "The Dog of Montargis" himself, who entirely won my affections. With him there could be no deceit; all was nature there.

Another tie bound me to him: the strong affection I had for my own dog, Rover, the friend and playmate of my solitary hours. Somehow I identified the affection the dog on the stage, a superb Newfoundland, had for his master, with that of my own diminutive terrier. At the same time the qualities of the "Dog of Montargis" far exceeded those of Rover. This I was obliged

to admit, although my affection for my dog by no means diminished from the comparison. The instinct of the former was wonderful, if not miraculous. He appeared to surpass in intelligence all his biped fellow-actors, and the whole audience, from the applause they gave him, seemed to be of the same opinion.

The principal business of the piece rested on him. Returning home with his master through the forest, they were attacked by assassins. After a desperate struggle, in which both the dog and his master show the greatest courage, the latter fell a victim to his assailants. The dog, finding his master slain, after giving vent to his feelings in a lamentable howl over the dead body, rushed from the stage. The next scene represented a street in Bondy. Although it was night, there was sufficient light on the stage to discern that the houses were arranged in such a manner that the doors of several were plainly seen in perspective. By the side of each door hung conspicuously a bell-handle.

Presently the dog made his appearance. In the darkness of the night the sagacious brute could not at first distinguish his home, and he examined two or three of the doors before he was

assured that he was right. He then seized the bell-handle, and rang the bell vigorously. Presently a man-servant, hastily dressed, and with a lantern in his hand, opened the door. The moment he saw the dog he intuitively understood that something was wrong, and both servant and dog rushed across the stage together. It now appears to me he rather led the dog than that the dog led him; but this did not strike me at the time. The grand effect was in the last scene, where the dog appeared as the principal witness in the trial. Although suspicion was strong against the real assassin, he had contrived to get up an *alibi*, which, though his witnesses were disreputable, would, in all probability, have allowed him to escape, and thus frustrate the ends of justice; so on the dog was thrown the *onus* of discovering the truth.

The court was opened; the several accused were placed in a line on one side of the stage; and the judge, officials, and soldiers, were ranged on the other. The dog was then brought in, and he carefully examined the accused. The excitement of the audience at the moment was intense. All seemed breathless with expectation. Suddenly the dog sprang on the real villain,

seized him by the throat, and dragged him down upon the stage. A terrific burst of applause was the reward the audience gave the intelligent brute for his sagacity and love for his master. The dog's owner, a Frenchman, then came forward and bowed the dog's acknowledgments for the compliment, the intelligent brute the while having his teeth fixed in the murderer's throat, apparently enjoying his vengeance. The Frenchman retired, and the business of the scene went on. The judge admitted the proof of the murderer's guilt, which had been made perfectly clear by the dog's evidence. "The finger of heaven," he said, "was evidently in the whole affair," and he concluded by ordering the villain to immediate execution. This, however, was not so easily performed, for when the soldiers advanced to take him away, it was with great difficulty they could remove the faithful brute from his throat. The young couple, whoever they might have been, for there were a pair of lovers somehow mixed up with the plot, were then and there, without let or hindrance, allowed to marry. They immediately placed themselves in a pious attitude, each with one hand on the head of the dog, the other raised towards the

gallery, evidently thanking the "gods" for their good fortune; and the curtain fell amidst the warm and unanimous plaudits of the audience.

I think I saw the piece three times, without it in the least palling on the senses. Each night after the performance was to me a sleepless one. It would have been absurd for me to have drawn any comparison between the dog's abilities and Rover's, with an idea of proving an approach to equality, yet my love for my dog burned as brightly as ever. At last I came to the conclusion that possibly Rover possessed as good natural abilities as his Thespian brother, and that education alone made the difference between them. I well knew how great the difference it made between men, and why should not the rule hold good with dogs?

After carefully thinking over the matter, and confirming myself in the idea, I determined, as Rover's natural guardian, to repair, as far as possible, the defects in his education. But an impediment arose at the very outset. Before I could teach Rover any points of canine accomplishments, I must be instructed in the art myself. This I resolved, if possible, to do; and I made Martha the confidant of my resolution. She, of

course, could not advise me on the subject; but she promised to consult her theatrical friend. I waited with great anxiety the result of her interview with him, which at last took place.

. She informed me that her friend had personally nothing to do with the stage arrangements, he being only a check-taker, but he would tell one of the carpenters, who understood all about it, and was a very good fellow, to call upon me. I waited impatiently for his visit; at last he came. I laid open to him my wishes, and I told him how happy I should be if Rover could be taught to be as intelligent and faithful as the dog of Montargis —did he think there was any chance of it—of course under proper instruction?

"I do," he said.

"Could you teach him, or instruct me how to teach him?" I inquired. "The latter I should prefer of the two."

"If your dog, sir," he said, "is a dog of ability, he can very easily be taught; but I hardly think it would be fair on my part to tell you how it is done. It is a sort of professional secret."

I admired his conscientiousness, but I differed from him in his conclusion. I asked him if he

had pledged himself to secrecy. He assured me he had not.

"Then what objection can you have?" I asked. "You abuse no confidence, and disobey no order."

"That is all very true," he replied; "but still, I do not see my way."

He would not say he might not do it, as I, who knew better than he, thought the contrary. He said something about wishing to oblige me; but that in justice to his conscience, if he gave way out of good feeling for me, he ought at least to have some temptation to form a sort of excuse for his scruples.

I immediately understood him. My available assets at the time consisted of two shillings, and as he appeared a very honourably-disposed fellow, I thought they would go but a short way in calming the pangs of his conscience. I was, however, mistaken, for when I asked him what amount he would charge for each lesson or feat, he mentioned the moderate price of one shilling. I was delighted with his answer. I could now teach my dog the two most interesting tricks I saw the dog of Montargis perform; but, before agreeing to pay for them, I thought it would be

but prudent if I introduced Rover to him, and obtained from him his candid opinion whether he considered my dog's natural abilities and qualifications sufficient to allow him to profit by the lesson. The carpenter thought it would be advisable, as it would be useless for me to pay for the lessons if the dog could not learn them, especially as "no money returned" was a strict rule in the theatrical profession.

Rover was accordingly introduced, and the carpenter examined him attentively and critically, while I stood by in a state of no little anxiety, waiting for his judgment.

"That dog will do capitally, sir," he said at last. "I never saw one—leastways judging from his appearance—who could learn faster. What a shame," he continued, in an under tone, "to starve a poor brute in that manner!"

I felt exceedingly annoyed at the remark, but, as it was a true one, I said nothing. The meanness of my uncle's house-keeping was visible in poor Rover's ribs, all of which might easily be counted. After a moment's silence on both sides, the carpenter said:

"Well, sir, is it a bargain? I am agreeable if you are."

"It is," I said. "There is the shilling for the first trick."

"Which would you like to know, sir?" asked the man.

"How the dog of Montargis was taught to ring the right bell!" I replied.

The carpenter put the shilling into his pocket.

"I will now tell you faithfully, sir, how it was done. I never gets off a bargain. All the bell-pulls in the street is made of wood except the one at his own house, and that's a sausage."

"A what?" I almost screamed.

"A sausage," he replied. "The poor brute knew his own house by the sausage for the bell-pull; and when he catches hold of it, he naturally rings the bell."

"Then I can't teach Rover to ring my bell?" I said.

"Oh yes, you could, sir," said the carpenter, "if you had a sausage tied to the wire; not otherwise. But then I don't know that your servants would much like it, for they would have to answer the door pretty often. There is not a dog within a mile round that wouldn't soon find it out, and have a pull at your bell to tell you his master was murdered."

I was thunderstruck at the information; but there was no help for it—the money was gone.

"I can't tell you anything more, sir, can I?" said the carpenter.

"No, thank you," I answered, in a somewhat melancholy tone.

The carpenter was preparing to leave the room, when the idea struck me that it would be a great satisfaction if Rover could be taught to detect any man that had murdered me (if that melancholy end should ever be my lot), and hand him over to the police. An act of retributive justice by the authorities for a crime of the kind would be cheap at a shilling. Even in a case of common assault, it might be useful if the magistrates would allow the dog's evidence to be taken. And even if a case of the kind had never yet occurred in an English court of law, it might open a precedent which afterwards might be acted upon in a manner most beneficial to the ends of justice.

"Stop one moment," I said to the carpenter. "I should like to know in what way the dog of Montargis was taught to detect the murderer of his master, or was it simply the effect of instinct?"

"Instinct be hanged," said the carpenter. "It was training, nothing but training; and I'll engage to make that dog of yours as well up in the way of doing it in a week as the other, every bit as well."

Without a moment's further hesitation I placed my other shilling in the carpenter's hand. He did not even condescend to thank me for it, but put it at once into his pocket.

"Well, sir, it is done in this way and no other," he said. "The murderer has always a large piece of dog's meat sewed up in the buzzim of his shirt, and so the dog always knows him in whatever part of the stage he may be, and pins him accordingly."

I stared at the man in utter astonishment.

"But do you mean to say he could not detect him without the dog's meat?" I asked.

"Certainly not, sir," he said. "Dogs is like Christians; they must have something to know a villain by; they can't guess it no more than you. It would lead to all sorts of mischief if they could. No, sir, depend upon it, a poor half-starved brute like your dog would be far more certain to detect your murderer by the dog's meat than by any other means; it's natural to him."

The carpenter then left me, and I endeavoured, but with scant success, to consider the increase of respect I had for Rover, on finding his natural abilities not inferior to those of the dog of Montargis, as an equivalent for the two shillings I had paid for my folly.

CHAPTER IV.

I AM SENT TO SCHOOL.

My life passed at my uncle's in the same melancholy routine for some eighteen months after Martha's arrival. I received neither kindness nor unkindness from him; my relations with him were of a perfectly neutral character. I had nothing for which to be grateful to him, nor had I the slightest reason to object to any treatment I received. When he saw me, which was perhaps once a day, he would address a few words to me in a civil tone, but seemed utterly indifferent to my reply, even, indeed, if he heard it at all. In his housekeeping nothing absolutely necessary for my comfort was wanting, but there was never the slightest superfluity of any kind. So strict was he in household expenses, and so

determined that no waste should take place, that at last he positively banished my poor dog Rover. What was the immediate cause of this severe act of his I do not know; but I am half inclined to think that some one had told him of the lessons I had received respecting Rover's education from the stage-carpenter, and my uncle very possibly calculated that if I instructed Rover on the same system, it might have an injurious effect on his larder. Possibly it might have arisen from a pecuniary cause, for about that time the dog-tax must have been first imposed, and thus Rover's existence was brought by the tax-gatherer more directly under the notice of my uncle.

And now occurred to me a really great sorrow, the greatest I had met with since the death of my father. I mentioned in the last chapter that my brother, in consequence of ill health, had been sent to the house of a relative of Martha's, who resided at Hastings. The change of air at first benefited him considerably, and we received most favourable reports of the progress he was making. A change then took place. In consequence of a severe cold he had caught, medical assistance had to be called in, and, although the symptoms were for a short time

amelicrated, he never thoroughly recovered from the shock. At last consumption set in, which ran through the usual course,—the reports we received one day raising our hopes, and the next crushing them again to a point below the one they had stood at before receiving the last favourable intelligence. At length he died somewhat suddenly, and I was sent down in company with Martha to attend the funeral. We arrived the evening before the ceremony, and the next morning I was shown my poor brother in his coffin. Even now, by closing my eyes, I can paint the scene as vividly on the retina as the moment it occurred. I can see the pale wax-work look of his countenance, with the calm expression of death on it, as well as the coffin and all the appurtenances in the room. One especially deserves mentioning. The woman with whom he had lived had filled the coffin with flowers. It was the custom, she said, in the part of the world she came from, Hampshire, to place flowers in the coffins of children. If this really was the case, it would be singular to trace from what source this beautiful custom had arisen. To search for its origin would be a curious task, and one, in my opinion, infinitely more attractive than

any of the researches into the funereal customs of nations I have ever yet met with.

The funeral over, I returned with Martha to London, where I continued to reside in the same house with my uncle some six months longer. And then, for some reason with which I am not acquainted, the office was closed, and my uncle left the house to reside in a much smaller one in one of the new streets then building in Lambeth. I know not if he lost any money at the time, but I remember he was exceedingly low-spirited, and that, moderate as had been his house-keeping before, he now reduced it considerably. Nay, more, he even dismissed Martha, and sent me to a cheap boarding-school in the country. As a rule, my time here did not pass uncomfortably. There were a great many boys, so that I had plenty of amusement. The progress I made in my studies would hardly, in the present day, be called satisfactory, though this is not to be wondered at, as we had but one master to every forty scholars.

At the termination of the first half-year I received a note from my uncle, informing me that I was not to return for the holidays, and that he had made arrangements for me to reside during

the time with the schoolmaster. This arrangement I had no objection to, especially as during the vacation we had no lessons to learn, and several other pupils also remained at school, principally those whose parents were abroad, many of them living in India.

Another six months passed on, and it was again arranged for me to spend my holidays at school. I was even more satisfied with the arrangement than on the former occasion. It was then Christmas, and we were all to a considerable extent confined to the house; now, on the contrary, it was summer, and the weather beautiful, and the three or four companions who remained with me were nice, intelligent, gentlemanly lads, and we used to amuse ourselves in the fields and country around, without any supervision of the masters, during the whole of the day. And now first occurred to me a proof of the old proverb, that "When the devil finds a man idle, he generally puts a job into his hands." It was so in my case. I don't know whether it was from the beauty of the weather, or what could have been the cause of it, but it was now that I felt my first experience of the tender passion. I managed in some manner to fall desperately in

love with a little girl about my own age, the daughter of the matron of the workhouse, and a very stiff, prim, severe woman she was. How her daughter first came under my notice I know not. Certainly it was not in the general manner these affections start up in the breasts of school-boys, by first seeing the beloved object in church, for her mother was a rigid Dissenter, and we, of course, from our more genteel position in society, attended the parish church. I never spoke one word to her in my life; but it was no matter, my affection for her surpassed the bounds of reason. My love grew so strong, I could conceal it no longer, and I determined to address her. But how? To speak to her was impossible, as of course I could not get a moment with her by myself. At last I consulted my great crony at school, an Indian boy, what steps he would advise me to take.

"Write to her," he said. "Nothing has so fine an effect on the mind of a girl as a well-written letter."

I should here mention that he had gained the prize for penmanship and English composition during the last half year.

I determined to adopt his advice, and we sat

down together to concoct the letter. It is only justice to him to state that he was far more fluent in the matter than I was, although I was to receive the whole credit of the production. It was certainly a beautiful piece of composition, and had a great effect on me. One sentence is still fresh in my memory. It ran thus:—"When through the guardian watchfulness of friends, the sweet employ of epistolary converse is destroyed, still shall the beauty of that form, and enchantments of that mind, remain impressed on my susceptible heart."

Altogether the letter was a master-piece. "If she can resist that," I said, as I folded it up, "she must be more than mortal."

I had now to find a messenger. That was a work of little difficulty, for the shoe-boy of the school, I knew perfectly well, would run any risk in my behalf, provided I remunerated him for the danger he incurred. He did so in the present instance; and for the sum of threepence, my week's pocket-money, he agreed to take the letter, as well as find the means of placing it in her hands. It was the afternoon when he started on his mission, and it was dark night before he returned home, I anxiously expecting him the

while. When he arrived, he told me he had been completely successful, and had induced a pauper nurse with whom he was acquainted to put the letter on her pillow, where she would be sure to find it when she went to bed. I must say I felt somewhat annoyed he had not brought back an answer with him, so that I might judge what my fate would be. However, there was no help for it, and as I knew I could not receive any answer before the next day, I went to my own bed, and, after some hours, fell asleep. My anxiety the next morning about the fate of the letter was so great that I was unable to eat any breakfast, a fact which the master did not notice, and it is more than probable he would have felt but little interest in it had he done so. Breakfast being over, I tried to amuse myself in the playground and while away the time as best I could; but it was impossible, and I anxiously watched every ring at the bell, hoping it would bring me some message from my beloved. No such good fortune, however, attended me, till about two hours after dinner, when I was told that the head master wanted me in the parlour. Somewhat puzzled to know what he could want with me, I hastened into the room, and there, to my

surprise, I not only found him,—holding in one hand an open letter, and in the other a cane,—but the matron of the workhouse and her daughter as well.

I was so puzzled and bewildered at the sight, that my heart fluttered audibly, and I remained breathless in presence of the three. It was but for a short time, however, for the master, still holding the letter in his hand, asked me if I were the author of it. I boldly replied that I was, and then gave a glance at my loved one to see the effect my answer had made on her. It was far from encouraging. There was a stern, chaste expression on her countenance which chilled me to the marrow; while on that of her mother, was a frown so ominous that the boldest female pauper in the workhouse would have trembled beneath it.

"Did any one assist you in writing this letter?" inquired the master.

"I refuse to answer your question," I replied. "I acknowledge myself to be the writer, and that is sufficient for you."

"I admit it," said the master, and seizing me by the collar he immediately commenced giving me a most severe caning.

I took my punishment manfully, nor did I utter a single cry during the whole of the time. I am not altogether certain I even felt the blows, so painful to my mind was the derogatory position I was in, and that too in the presence of the object of my affections, who calmly stood by without even an expression of sympathy on her countenance. When the master had finished the punishment, he thrust me out of the room, telling me that I was "a young reprobate." I turned round with the intention of telling him the statement was false, and that my intentions were pure and honourable, when a glance at the countenance of the young lady stopped me, so strongly was the expression of contempt marked on it. To say the truth, I was afterwards not altogether sorry for it, as it completely erased in my breast all esteem and affection for her, and instead of the amiable, lovely creature I imagined her to be, my last reminiscence of her was that of a disagreeable little vixen. At the same time I can conscientiously state that it would be difficult for a youth to sustain a more cruel infliction than that of being caned in the presence of the object of his affections.

The punishment I had received, certainly

made a most painful impression on me. I now cared nothing more for the damsel, but the remembrance of the disgraceful treatment I had received in her presence galled me almost to madness. I determined to remain no longer at school, and wrote to my uncle, candidly telling him the whole of the circumstances of the case, and requesting he would remove me. He wrote back a reply, ordering me to stay where I was. A fortnight afterwards, as soon as my pocket-money was sufficient to pay the postage, I sent him another letter, saying, that if he did not remove me at once I would run away and get the captain of some ship to take me as cabin-boy. This letter had the desired effect. My uncle came down himself to the school two days afterwards, and having paid the bill, without any animadversion or blame, took me back to London with him, and without saying, I believe, half-a-dozen words on the way. During the next few days I remained at his house, but as we only met at meal-times, little conversation passed between us. He did not appear at all angry with me, nor did he make any remarks respecting my behaviour, but seemed simply to ignore my presence.

This routine continued for about a week, when my uncle informed me he intended to send me to a school at Clapham, one of a much better description than that I had just left. All the pupils were sons of gentlemen of fortune or professional men, whereas at the other school there was a great mixture of classes. At this school I remained till I was past sixteen, and I lived there all the year round, holidays as well. I think during the whole of the time I did not see my uncle more than twice. I had a more liberal supply of pocket-money, and the comforts of the school were in every degree vastly superior to the one I had lately left. During the time I was at Clapham I suffered another attack of the tender passion, but this time of a totally different description to the last. Instead of falling in love with a girl as young as myself (I may here add that since my adventure with the daughter of the matron of the workhouse I cordially detested all little girls), the present object of my affections had been fifty, but how many years before it would be difficult to say. She occupied the honourable position of laundry-maid to the establishment, and with her I fell desperately in love. It would be base flattery

to say she was handsome; on the contrary, beyond a good-natured expression of countenance, there was but one attraction about her; but that, in my eyes, compensated for any other defects, assuming there to have been any—she was much older than myself. I seemed to hold it as a chivalrous feat to captivate the affections of a woman so much my senior; it made me feel more manly, and more on an equality with her. I will not exactly say she encouraged me, for that might be doing her an injustice; but certainly she did not discourage my attentions, and received graciously the buns and other delicacies I purchased for her. If, however, I became at all too demonstrative, she used to threaten to tell the Doctor, but, to do her justice, she never kept her word. This innocent flirtation continued till I left school, when, on parting with her in the laundry, I clasped her in my arms and kissed her affectionately. The tears came into her eyes, and I thought I had offended her, so I begged her pardon and wished her good-bye, telling her she would ever be dear to me, to which she made no reply.

For some weeks after I left school I resided with my uncle, who allowed me to do exactly as

I liked. The principal portion of each day I spent with a school-fellow who had left school about twelve months before, and lived in the neighbourhood of the East India Docks, and whose father held some lucrative appointment connected with the shipping, but of what description I am unable to say. Certain it is that I there acquired my love for a sea life. I used, in company with my friend, to visit the officers of the different East-Indiamen which were then in the Docks. My mind became excited with the different adventures they had passed through, and the very great men they considered themselves when once to the eastward of the Cape of Good Hope. It must be remembered, however, that in those days the captains of the East India Company's ships, especially those engaged in the China trade, held a very different position in the minds of the public from what they do at present, though I had afterwards good reason to know that the superiority they claimed was due rather to the exclusive power possessed by the Company's charter, than to any real merits on their part as seamen, officers, or gentlemen. However, the different narratives I heard inspired me with an intense love for a sailor's life,

and I determined to become one. I now attempted to summon up courage to speak to my uncle on the subject, but he saved me the trouble by one morning asking me if I had formed any idea what profession or business I should like to enter.

"It is quite time," he continued, "that you should entertain the matter seriously."

"Well, uncle," I replied, "I should, if possible, like to get an appointment as midshipman in the Honourable East India Company's service."

"As far as I am concerned I have not the least objection to your entering the East India Company's service; the only impediment I see in your way is that I have not the slightest interest with any one who could obtain for you an appointment of the kind. Don't you think the navy would suit you better? I am distantly acquainted with some who are in authority there; and might possibly be able to advance your interests with them."

"Thank you, uncle," I said, "if it had been a time of war I should have preferred it; in peace, there is so little doing in the navy it would not have the same attraction for me as the

East India Company's service, where I should be continually moving about, and seeing a great deal of the manners and customs of foreign nations."

My uncle made a slight grimace, evidently at the idea of the amount of information I should receive as to the manners and customs of other nations. He said nothing on the point, however, and merely reminded me again that he had no interest in the service.

I asked if he had any objection to my applying to my friend Burton on the subject. "His father," I said, "knows a great many of the captains of the East Indiamen, and as he has shown me a great deal of attention, I think it very probable he might obtain an appointment for me."

"Ask him if you please," said my uncle, yawning, "and when you have his answer, let me know the result."

I promised I would do so, and the conversation dropped.

CHAPTER V.

I AM RECEIVED AS A MIDSHIPMAN IN THE SERVICE OF THE HON. EAST INDIA COMPANY.

ARMED with my uncle's authority, I immediately hurried off to my friend Burton's house, and fortunately found him at home. I was so full of the object of my mission, and also so much out of breath with the rapidity of my pace, that when I arrived he easily perceived my visit was caused by no ordinary motive. Noticing the anxious expression on my face, Burton said to me,

"Why, my dear fellow, what ails you this morning? Have you been told that you are heir to a dukedom, or received the intelligence that your uncle is about to marry again, and intends to cut you off with a shilling? If

neither of these, what other important subject occupies your mind? Tell me at once, and let me advise you if I can."

"Neither of the contingencies you speak of are likely to occur," I replied. "It is perfectly true, however, that I have something on my mind which causes me considerable anxiety, and I want you to assist me if you possibly can."

"Of that," replied Burton, "you may be perfectly certain. But what is it?"

I told him I had mentioned to my uncle my desire to enter the service of the East India Company, and that he had said he had no objection if it could be accomplished, but that he had no interest in the service, and could not assist me personally. That I had asked my uncle if I might apply to him (Burton), and he had not only given me permission to do so, but wished me success, as I seemed to have set my heart on entering the service.

"And now, Burton," I continued, tell me candidly if you can in any manner aid me?"

"I am afraid my personal assistance will be of but little use to you," replied my friend. "I

have no doubt my father can help you if he will, but the latter point is not certain. In the first place I am positive he will not do so unless he has an unqualified assurance from your uncle that he consents to your leaving England. In that case very possibly he may use his influence, and if he does he is pretty certain to succeed, as I believe he knows three-fourths of the captains in the service."

"Will you speak to him for me?" I asked.

"I would willingly do so," said Burton, "but it will be far better and have more effect if you applied direct to him yourself. Were I to do it, he might possibly think I had influenced you, which would render him perhaps chary in interfering in the matter. You, on the contrary, are a great favourite of his, and if the request comes spontaneously from you, he is much more likely to interest himself about it. In the meantime I will speak to my mother on the subject, and ask her to advance your interests as much as she possibly can, and if she takes the matter in hand, you may be pretty certain she will succeed. Now stop and dine with us," he continued; "I know they will be happy to see you, and besides I want to introduce you to my cousin Mary Anne, who

is about to spend three weeks or a month with us. She is a very nice girl, and I'm sure you would like her."

I readily accepted the invitation, and by way of making the time pass agreeably before dinner, we went down to the docks and visited one of the ships which was preparing for that season's voyage—the *Vizagapatam.* She certainly was a beautiful ship, and we examined her attentively. She was far from being in a forward state, as she was then in the hands of the riggers, who were placing on her the masts and cordages, whilst the painters and carpenters were at work in putting up the fittings and bulkheads of the cabins of the officers. When I saw the noble ship, the thought came over me how proud I should be if I could possibly obtain an appointment on board of her; but this I feared was a piece of presumption on my part even to wish. I asked one of the carpenters at work to show me a midshipman's cabin, and I certainly must confess I was somewhat surprised at its diminutive size. I should think it was about seven feet long, and six wide. This was the extreme. I can remember it well, as on the return voyage, small as it was, a long eighteen-pounder was placed in the

cabin, which completely traversed it. However, I thought there would be quite room enough for me, and that I could make myself very comfortable in it, although I had not the slightest reason to believe I should ever occupy it.

We now returned home, and shortly afterwards dinner was announced. Mr. and Mrs. Burton received me in a most friendly manner, and the latter introduced me to her niece, Mary Anne. She was a girl about my own age, with fair complexion, very tall, and delicate looking; in fact, she stooped considerably, occasioned evidently by weakness. Her face was pretty, and voice mild and attractive; altogether she interested me greatly. I spoke but little to her during dinner, for I was not much used to ladies' society, in fact, I may conscientiously state that she was the first young *lady* in whose society I had ever been, for none ever visited the house of my uncle, nor was I likely to see any while I was at school.

When the ladies retired from the table, Burton gave me a significant look, as much as to say, "you had better commence immediately." Tremblingly I began by asking Mr. Burton whether there was much difficulty in obtain-

ing an appointment as a midshipman in the East India Company's service?

"That entirely depends upon the interest a candidate may have," he replied, "and what sort of a lad he is. If he is a gentlemanly young man," he continued, quitting the table and taking his seat in an easy chair in which he was accustomed to take a nap for half an hour every day after dinner, "the facilities are of course greater than if he were a bumpkin, for the captains now are very particular as to the class of young men they take under them." And here he yawned, and settled his head back in a corner of the chair as if preparing for sleep.

I felt greatly discouraged at his manner, and was about dropping the subject for the moment, when he suddenly roused himself, and looking at me attentively, said,—

"But why do you ask?"

"Because I want to know to whom my uncle ought to apply."

"You don't mean to say he is going to sea at his time of life?" said Mr. Burton, laughing. "He would make a pretty midshipman, certainly."

"Oh, no," I replied, "he has no intention of

doing anything of the kind. It was for myself I asked."

"Indeed! And do you really wish to become a sailor?" he said.

"Most earnestly," I replied.

"But tell me, am I to understand your uncle does not object to your entering the service?" he asked.

"He has no objection whatever," I said; "only having no interest himself, he does not know to whom to apply."

"Well, I will inquire for you," he said, after a moment's silence—and then again laying his head back in the chair, he prepared to go to sleep, while his son and I remained silent.

Presently he started up and said, "We will now join the ladies," and he then left the room.

I took the opportunity of stopping behind him to speak to his son. Before, however, I could utter a word, he said to me,—

"You're all right, old fellow. My father will do it for you."

"I don't know how you have arrived at such a conclusion, for he did not say anything about it," I said.

"My dear fellow, I know him as well as you know yourself. Didn't you see he tried to go to sleep and could not? That is always the case with him when anything interests him; if not, he would have slept soundly after dinner, even if a dozen military bands were playing outside the door. No, make yourself quite easy, you'll find all will come right, depend upon it."

We now went upstairs to the drawing-room, where I entered into a conversation with Mary Anne and her aunt. The former improved very much on acquaintance, and conversed very agreeably. She left us early, however, her aunt informing me she had been ordered to do so by the physician, and that being of a delicate constitution she had come to London on purpose to be under the care of some first-rate medical man, as it was feared she might go into a rapid decline. I expressed my sorrow somewhat unintelligibly, although the information really shocked me very much, so greatly had I been pleased with the young lady's manner.

I soon after took my leave to return to my uncle's house. My friend Burton accompanied me to the door, and said to me,—

"Now, my dear fellow, don't be anxious

or low-spirited. Your game is certain; and even in case my father's interest should flag in the matter, I will take good care my mother keeps it alive."

During the next week I heard nothing from Mr. Burton. I called once at the house, but none of the family were at home. I would willingly have called again the next day, but I did not like to appear importunate, and determined to put off another visit till the following week. Before the time had arrived for me to call again, I received a note from Mr. Burton, asking me to dine with him the next day, as he wished to speak to me. I need not say I willingly accepted the invitation; indeed, I believe that nothing but a serious accident would have kept me from the house. So great was my anxiety on my arrival, that positively I forgot the existence of Mary Anne, and it was not till after I had been in the house some little time that Mrs. Burton called my attention to her absence.

"She has been so poorly all day," she continued, "we thought it better she should keep her room. The physician says that all excitement will be prejudicial to her, and that she

should enter into conversation as little as possible, for fear of tiring her lungs."

I expressed my sorrow rather clumsily, and shortly afterwards Mr. Burton and his son returned home.

During dinner not one word was spoken by Mr. Burton concerning the subject on which he wished to see me. As soon, however, as the cloth had been removed, he said,—

"And now, young gentleman, do you still continue your wish to go to sea?"

"More ardently than ever," I replied.

"Well, if so, and I have your uncle's written consent, I have obtained for you a berth as midshipman on board the *Vizagapatam*. She is bound for St. Helena, Bombay, and China so you will have plenty of sea to get over before you return home. The captain of the ship is a gentlemanly man, and an intimate friend of mine; in fact, either as officer, sailor, or gentleman, there is not his superior in the whole fleet. I do not know much of the others, but suppose there will be the usual mixture among them—good, bad, and indifferent. However, you have got to rub your shoulder with the world, and you will find out all these things for yourself. Had

I better write to your uncle, or will he call on me?"

I replied, with my heart leaping for joy at the news I had heard, that I would speak to my uncle and request him to write, and I left early in the evening, wishing, if possible to make my uncle write that night, so that no time need be lost.

My uncle received the information with his ordinary cold listlessness. He merely said,—

"I'm glad you are suited at last, my dear boy. Of the two, I would rather call on Mr. Burton, which will save him the trouble of coming here. I will write to-morrow, and ask him to make an appointment for me to call."

"Do you not think it would be better to write to-night, uncle?" I said. "I should be sorry if the appointment were given away to any one else."

"Just as you please," he replied, yawning. "Get me the pen and ink, and I will write at once."

I immediately obeyed him, and after the letter was written to Mr. Burton, and addressed, he gave it to me to post, which I did without delay.

The following day Mr. Burton wrote a reply, making an appointment for my uncle to call on him. We all three met together at his private office in George Court, Lombard Street. The offices themselves consisted of two separate rooms, one, marked "private," for himself, and the other appropriated to two clerks. We were ushered into the private room, and I introduced my uncle to Mr. Burton. The conversation was short and explicit. My uncle was as cool, apathetic, and clear-headed as usual, and it struck me that the effect the meeting had on Mr. Burton was to do away with all surprise on his part at my wishing to go to sea. With regard to matters of financial arrangement, Mr. Burton, who appeared to be well up in the subject, told my uncle he considered my outfit would be from a hundred to a hundred and twenty pounds, and there might be fifteen to twenty pounds more for other items. My uncle pleaded ignorance on all similar matters, and asked Mr. Burton if he would kindly take the superintendence on himself, and if so, he should be happy to place a cheque immediately in his hands. Mr. Burton consented to the arrangement, a cheque was drawn, and my uncle, about five minutes after-

wards, quitted the office, nor have I any reason to believe that he and Mr. Burton ever met again.

I must say these arrangements met with my unqualified approbation. I knew perfectly well that Mr. Burton would place the principal portion of the duty on his son, so that it would be much the same as if I had had the expenditure of the money myself, plus the prudent surveillance of Mr. Burton. Nor was I mistaken in the conclusion I had arrived at, for the next morning Mr. Burton told me I was to call at his office, when his son would introduce me to an outfitter in Leadenhall Street, from whom I should be able to purchase all the things necessary for my voyage.

I shall never forget the effect the outfitter's warehouse had on me, when I entered it the next morning in company with young Burton. Nay more, my idea of the dignity of a midshipman in the Company's service increased immensely from the reception I met with. Nothing could be more polite or respectful than the behaviour of the head of the firm, a most gentlemanly elderly man. When introduced to him, he placed two chairs at a table, one for me, and the other

for Burton, and then putting before us a printed list of necessaries for the voyage, comprising at least a hundred different articles, he stood by to give us his opinion, in case it should be required. We went down the list seriatim, and I should say out of the whole of the number of articles mentioned as absolutely required for a midshipman, three-fourths were utterly useless. Burton remarked that he thought many of the things were hardly necessary, and pointed them out. The outfitter bore the opinion resignedly, and the articles were struck out of the list. The number of shirts I ordered would, I think, have been one a-day from the time I left England till the ship returned again; and socks in equal proportion. Everything, without the slightest exception, that could possibly enter the mind of a midshipman to conceive, and even beyond it, was sold by the outfitter. He had books, including Bibles and Testaments, and I believe it is more than possible, had I looked more carefully down the list, I might have found instructions for making a will, or directions for pious thoughts preparatory to the celebration of the marriage ceremony. I bought a valuable sextant or quadrant, I forget which article it was, but which I never used.

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Having made my selection from the list, the foreman of the tailors was summoned to make my various uniforms. If the behaviour of the outfitter himself had been respectful to me, and raised my opinion of the dignity of a midshipman, that of the foreman of the tailors increased it greatly. The earnest manner in which he regretted the trouble he gave me when required to hold up my arm for the measure of the sleeve, or other similar formalities, delighted me much as proving the excess of importance I had received since my appointment. I purchased goods to the amount of a hundred and twenty pounds, the bill for which was to be sent to Mr. Burton; and we then left the warehouse, being bowed out with every mark of humility by the outfitter, the foreman of the tailors, and other officials employed in the warehouse.

I dined the same day with the Burtons and made a more intimate acquaintance with the delicate cousin Mary Anne, whose health had now sufficiently recovered to allow her to be present at the table. To say the truth she began to interest me exceedingly, and the sympathy I felt for her, as I watched her drooping form, was great indeed. After dinner, when I mentioned

confidentially to Mrs. Burton—a somewhat romantic lady—how delicate her niece appeared, she replied that she was indeed "a fragile tendril." The expression struck me as being exceedingly appropriate, and I thought of it during my long walk home that evening, and I believe dreamt of it that night as well.

By way of saving trouble the outfitter was to send my uniform, dirk, etc., to Mr. Burton's house, and the chest containing the remaining portion of my outfit on board the ship, marked with my name, and the three capital letters, M. M. M. (Midshipman's Mess), with directions where it should be placed, and the same day the ship dropped down to Gravesend, where, on a certain day, I was to join her. I tried on my uniform that evening, and received the compliments of Mrs. Burton and her niece on my appearance. I hardly think, even at the present day, they were undeserved, for although barely more than sixteen I was so tall that I appeared two years older, was well-made, and my face not altogether unhandsome, at any rate that was the conclusion I came to at the time, as I looked at myself in the glass. If I had had any doubt on the subject, it would have been confirmed by a remark I

heard made by Mr. Burton, in confidence to his wife. "A remarkably fine-grown young fellow that."

It had been determined by my uncle that I should reside at the Burtons' house until the ship left. This permission he gave with so little appearance of feeling that I felt rather annoyed at it, and said somewhat curtly, that I thought I had better take leave of him at once, to which he readily assented, and I left him without the slightest particle of regret on either side.

The following Sunday I attended divine worship at Limehouse church, and on my way there and back had the pleasure of having Mary Anne on my arm, as well as sitting next her in the pew. I had dressed myself in my uniform for the occasion, and excited, I think, a good deal of attention. The eyes of a great portion of the congregation I found were frequently directed on me, and I even thought the sermon had been preached especially for my benefit, though I afterwards learnt it was the one the reverend gentleman had preached regularly for many years at the beginning of the month of January, when ships were leaving for the Indies. He [illegible] attention of officers and captains in

authority over men, to the necessity of instructing them in the way they should go, and of taking care of their spiritual welfare, so as to order themselves in such a manner that they might be an example to the heathen in the different climes and parts they visited. They should show, he said, by their own pure lives and spotless characters, the blessings of Christianity; and each, to the fullest extent in his power, either by teaching or by religious and moral conduct, be as a missionary to the benighted pagans, so that they might exclaim with wonder, "Who can be the God of these men, whose lives are so free from sin and ungodliness? What blessings would fall on the heads of those who carried out this system! And he was proud to say, that no body of men in the world carried out the principles of morality and Christianity to a greater extent than those who served in the ships of the merchant princes of England."

During the time the clergyman was making these remarks I looked at him attentively, trying to appear as if I were marking all he said, and treasuring up the advice he gave. I remember feeling rather puzzled at the time what expression to wear, and whether humility should

be mixed up with it. But I then concluded a serious and marked attention would be better befitting the occasion, so I kept the muscles of my face as rigidly to that point as I could, and when I came out of church I had some difficulty in relaxing them.

On quitting the churchyard, I saw outside a number of sailors, and wishing to wear as fully as possible that off-hand dignity of demeanour so characteristic of a naval officer, I held myself erect as I passed them. I did not even condescend to glance that way, and could not tell whether they touched their hats to me or not. One singular expression, however, fell on my ear which at the time I could hardly understand. A sailor in the group, evidently a ribald drunkard, said as I passed, "Company's candlestick!" It soon faded from my memory, and I should perhaps have forgotten it altogether had I not heard it afterwards.

I remained at Mr. Burton's house, before being ordered to join the ship, fully a week longer, during which time I had frequent opportunities of being in the company of Mary Anne. The more I saw of her, the more I liked her, and the more anxious became my inquiries respecting

her health. When conversing with Mrs. Burton on the subject she frequently made use of the expression "fragile tendril," and on one occasion she told me, with tears in her eyes, that the physician had said the poor girl had not, unless by a miracle, twelve months' life in her. This intelligence caused me continued pain till the departure of the ship, for even if in her absence it subsided for a moment, it burst out afresh directly I saw her again.

The day for my joining the ship at last arrived, and I made preparations for leaving the Burtons' house. I arrayed myself in my full uniform, including the dirk and hat with the cockade, leaving my old clothes to be given to any poor person who might want them. I then took leave of my friends with many expressions of kind regard on both sides. It struck me that when I bade Mary Anne farewell I saw tears in her eyes, and lest my feelings should be too much for me, I was obliged to turn my head aside and hurry off to the hackney-coach, which was waiting to take me to Billingsgate, where I should find a boat to Gravesend. Once in the coach I gave unrestrained vent to my emotions, and leaning back, so that my eyes might not dwell

on anything that was passing, and thus my attention be disturbed, I thought of the interesting creature I had just left.

In this strain my thoughts continued till the coach had arrived in Lower Thames Street, when, from the block of carts which crowded the narrow thoroughfare, I was obliged to descend from the vehicle and continue my way on foot. I pushed through the crowd as well as I could, and entered Billingsgate Market, which was then far from being the well-organised institution it is at the present day; for during business hours, to the eye of the uninitiated, it was a scene of the wildest confusion. Market was just over when I arrived, and the whole of the assistants, fishwomen and salesmen, were congregated together, laughing, scolding, and jesting, to the fullest extent of their lungs. On entering the market I drew myself up to my full height, and, with a sort of determined air, such as I had noticed naval men in authority assume, passed onward. Presently I heard some sailor near me say, "Company's candlestick!" I remembered having heard it before, and the coincidence struck me forcibly, and I wondered what it could mean. Then I reached

a crowd of fishwomen and others conversing together in a state of great excitement about something that had occurred during that morning's market, and my way was again impeded. Instead of asking them to allow me to pass, I, with an authoritative air, pushed by them, which seemed to annoy them greatly; for one of their number, a tall masculine-looking virago, said, as I passed, "There he goes, Company's candlestick!"

I turned round and indignantly asked what she meant by insulting an officer and a gentleman in such an unprovoked manner. Instead of replying to my question, she only repeated the insult, which was taken up by all the others present, both male and female. I looked scornfully at them for a moment, and then considering how derogatory it would be for me to quarrel with them, I turned away and proceeded towards the boat. They all followed me, however, and others joined the crowd, calling out as they did so, "There he goes, Company's candlestick!" I was so annoyed that I turned round with the intention of attacking one of the foremost of my male tormenters,

when again prudence got the better of me, and I went on till I reached the boat. I descended to the deck, nor were they content even then, but kept calling out from above, "There he goes, Company's candlestick!" clapping their hands the while to keep time.

At last, thoroughly enraged, I turned round, and placing myself in such a threatening heroic attitude that the statue of Ajax defying the lightning was, in comparison, but a feeble, washed-out, water-coloured sketch, I explained to them that they were nothing better than a set of ill-bred ruffians. One of the ladies among them, on hearing my words, seized a quantity of fish refuse, which she flung at me. It fortunately missed me, and fell on the deck. The mate of the boat, fearing for the cleanliness of his decks, requested me to go below, or I might have other unsavoury compliments of the kind played on me. I thought it better to follow his advice, and, in a somewhat undignified manner, crept down the ladder into a little cabin,—for at the time I am writing of, steamers were not in use. Although safe from their missiles, I was not in any manner sheltered from their insults, for I

could hear, I believe, every male and female voice among them still calling out "Company's candlestick! Company's candlestick!" and thankful indeed was I when the captain gave orders to unmoor the boat, and we started with the tide down the river.

CHAPTER VI.

MY ADVENTURES AT SEA.

It seemed that day I was doomed to be disappointed in everything. On my arrival on board the *Vizagapatam*, I asked a sailor to whom I ought to report myself.

"To the officer on deck," he replied, pointing to a smart-looking young man, the fifth mate, who apparently had just left the hold.

"All right, young fellow," he said. "You've not come before you're wanted. Just go down into the hold, will you, and report yourself to the sixth officer, who is superintending the stowage of some water-casks. But if you'd take my advice you'd shift that magnificent rig of yours, and put on something a little more ship-shape, or you'll find your splendid appear-

ance considerably blemished before you leave the hold."

I must say that I felt much annoyed at the reception I met with, and went below to the gun-deck, where I saw written on a cabin door the words "Purser's steward," and a dirty-looking man inside. I politely asked him if he would show me my cabin.

"Certainly," he said. "Come this way,"—and he took me to the cabin I had visited when the ship was in the docks, and in which I found my sea-chest. "This," continued he, "is your berth, and you're a lucky fellow, for I expect you won't have any other midshipman on board for the next week to come."

"But where are their cabins?" I inquired.

"Their cabins!" he said, with a look of astonishment, "This is as much theirs as yours. Here the whole of you will eat, drink, and assemble for the next eighteen months, and your hammocks will be slung in the steerage. But now I must leave you."

I must say I felt completely aghast at this intelligence, and as soon as I was alone I seated myself on my sea-chest, where I remained for some time. The mate whom I had seen on the

deck then passed the cabin door, and seeing me seated, he said to me,—

"Didn't I tell you to go to the forehold and place yourself under the orders of the sixth officer? You'd better do so at once, for remember that on board this ship you will find it the rule as soon as an order is given it must be obeyed."

Although he said this by no means in an offensive tone, I felt considerably annoyed; but opening my sea-chest at once I arrayed myself in a commoner suit of clothes, and went below into the hold, which appeared enormous. With some difficulty in the obscure light of the few candles, I distinguished the sixth mate and told him I had come on board.

"That's right," he said. "Now just take this lantern and light the men who are at work forward."

I now, for the first time, began to have some idea of the meaning of the words "Company's candlestick." which was, as I afterwards fully discovered, a nickname applied to midshipmen, in consequence of a portion of their duties being to take charge of the lanterns when ship's stores and the cargo were being stowed away in the hold.

I remained in the hold till it was time for the hands to leave off work, when the sixth officer told me that as the midshipmen's mess had not been yet arranged I was to mess for the next few days with the officers. I now went to my cabin, and again put on my uniform, and the signal being given that dinner was ready, I proceeded to the cuddy or mess-room of the officers. On my entrance, finding me in full uniform, I was greeted by a loud laugh from the four officers present, one of whom, the third officer, told me they would excuse me for the future making so brilliant an appearance, and that on another occasion if in undress uniform, with clean hands and face, it would be fully sufficient. During dinner, the conversation passed gaily between the officers, but not one word was addressed to me. As soon as the meal was over, and the wine and spirits put on the table, the third officer said coolly to me,—

"That will do, young fellow, you may now make yourself scarce."

During the time which elapsed between my arrival and that of my brother midshipmen, my life was a solitary one indeed; for although I took my meals with the officers, a word was

never addressed to me by any of them, and as soon as the meal was over I was ordered to leave. During the day I was tolerably employed in pursuing my duties (as "Company's candlestick" in the hold), and in the evening I used, when the weather was fine and not too cold, to wrap myself in my watch-coat and sit on one of the quarter-deck carronades, or hen-coops on the poop, and meditate. At least, I tried to meditate, for I rather liked the word, although I must say my meditations centred chiefly on Mary Anne and the unhappy fate evidently in store for her. I remember one afternoon I determined to write her a parting ode, which I devoutly hoped she would keep by her till her death. I never, however, completed more than about a dozen lines. The fact was, many insuperable difficulties presented themselves, which I had not dreamed of before commencing. I got through the first few lines well enough. I remember distinctly my first difficulty in the composition. It occurred in the following three lines:—

"When first I saw thy pretty face,
At number two Commercial Terrace,
Sweet smiles and blushes darting—"

The difficulty here arose as to "Commercial Terrace." On the one hand it appeared to give the simplicity of diction and *vraisemblance* to the verse which was desirable; on the other, "Commercial Terrace" seemed to destroy a great deal of the pathos. Then, again, I met with other difficulties in the versification, till at last I threw it aside and went on deck to meditate on the "fragile tendril" whom the world was so soon to lose. From that moment, however, my sympathy for her gradually decreased, and I believe it entirely dwindled away during a storm we encountered in the Bay of Biscay. Her life, I am happy to say, was spared. A few years since, when walking with a friend through Lincoln's-inn-Fields, a tall, elderly, and very corpulent lady came out of one of the offices and entered an open carriage standing by the pathway. My friend, who knew her, conversed with her for a few moments, and then joined me. On asking who she was, I found she was the wife of a barrister in large practice, and the mother of some ten children, and, in the course of his description, found she was the "fragile tendril" whose anticipated unhappy fate had caused me so much sorrow in my youth.

The early days of a midshipman's life when first he joins a ship, and the broken illusions which occur during the time, have been so often and so fully described, that it would be useless on my part to occupy the time of the reader by relating the occurrences which befell me. Suffice it to say, before the end of a week all my preconceived notions of an officer and a gentleman had been thoroughly dissipated, and nothing but the stern truth remained behind,—that the charms of the service had been greatly overrated. At the time I became a midshipman the Honourable East India Company's service was considered a better and more gentlemanly occupation than the sea service in similar ships is in the present day. How this conclusion was arrived at I know not; certainly nothing could be more detestable than the life I led when in the service. The position of the officers in society was far inferior to that of officers in His Majesty's service, although they were much better paid. Of this difference in their social position they seemed to be fully aware, and by way of rectifying it as far as possible, they tried to imitate the bearing and manner of naval officers, and frequently caricatured

them. A sort of gradation, or class, was established on board their ships, which on that of a high-admiral would have been considered simply ridiculous. As a proof of their importance, they had introduced on board many of their ships a brutality and severity which would have been regarded as utterly infamous on board the most rigidly disciplined ship of war.

As a midshipman I held a sort of neutral position. I was expected to maintain a gentlemanly demeanour, and dress far better than the sailors; but at the same time it was a crime little less than mutiny to consider that while I held the position of midshipman, I was at less than an unapproachable distance, in point of dignity, from the sixth mate. Shortly before sailing my five other messmates joined the ship. They were all sons of gentlemen, and of fair average education. Things went on very smoothly among us, and as far as our mess was concerned we had but little to complain of. We were divided into three watches, two in each watch, which rendered the duties by no means too onerous.

In the course of a couple of months we had all of us shaken down tolerably well into the performance of our several duties. We were often

punished by mast-heading, and that too for very trifling offences. As a rule, with the exception of the captain, we cordially detested the officers of our ship, and not without reason. The officer of my own watch was a singularly objectionable character. He had formerly been in the navy, but had been constrained to leave the service from some act he had committed, and had then entered the East India Company's service. That he was a good seaman there was little doubt—that he was a ruffian was certain. The other officers imitated him as much as they could, thinking thereby to gain something of the tone and manner of the royal navy.

In due time the ship arrived at St. Helena, where she remained for some weeks. Here we took on board two companies of the ——th regiment of foot, and several extra officers and their families whom we were to convey to Bombay. During this part of the voyage I had another access of the tender passion. Among the passengers on board the ship was a young lady who particularly attracted my attention. She was the daughter of Major C——, a kind-hearted, gentlemanly man, but whose position of course was so superior to that of the unfor-

tunate East India Company's midshipmen, that anything in the shape of acquaintanceship, or even conversation, with the young lady was impossible.

Maria C—— was an exceedingly pretty girl, about sixteen or seventeen years of age. She was evidently, from the expression of her countenance (for I never but once had the pleasure of speaking to her), exceedingly amiable. It was perfect happiness for me to see her come on deck. I used to watch her each afternoon, with her mother and sister, when the band was playing, and I sincerely envied the military officers who fluttered around her. On these occasions my eyes used to be incessantly riveted on her, and I was often severely rated by my superior officers for my inattention to my duties.

At last I felt certain she noticed me, but most probably only from the fact of my incessantly gazing at her when on deck. She evidently mentioned my behaviour to her sister, for the latter used to regard me in a peculiarly inquisitive and sarcastic manner. I hardly think she mentioned it to her mother, at least I never had any reason to believe from that lady's conduct that she was even aware of my existence.

My affection for Maria increased to such an extent, that at last I grew desperate, and I determined, cost what it might, notwithstanding our fearful difference in position, to make known to her my passion. But how to do this was a difficulty indeed. To address her personally on the subject was of course impossible. Her mother was a cross-grained, ill-tempered woman, who, when not prostrated by sea-sickness, which unfortunately rarely occurred, had her eyes incessantly fixed on her daughters. I had too much dread of her to think of broaching the subject to her, even if my position would not have made such an act presumptuous.

There existed only one member of Maria's family with whom there was the slightest probability of my forming an intimacy, and that was her young brother, a boy about eleven years of age. I immediately broke ground with him, and succeeded admirably. I commenced by giving him a pressing invitation to the midshipmen's berth, where we sumptuously regaled him with some plum-duff and other delicacies, which I afterwards understood disagreed with him. By degrees my acquaintance ripened into intimacy, and then, after binding him over to eternal

secrecy, I confided to him my unhappy consuming passion for his sister. Young as he was, and inexperienced in such matters, he kindly sympathised with me, and promised to assist me in every way in his power. I advised him to begin by pointing me out to his sister, and telling her how vastly superior I was to the other midshipmen, and then to hint gently to her how incessantly I was talking and thinking of her. This I considered would be as much as would be prudent for the commencement.

In a short time I found his sister had remarked me favourably, and thought me very good-looking. Here was encouragement for me. Of course I sent word back that she was the loveliest girl I had ever seen. The next day she smiled kindly when she saw me. We were then within a fortnight's sail of Bombay. I used to weep bitterly in the night-watches when I thought that on her arrival there, I should see her no more. Sometimes I thought of deserting the ship and enlisting as a private in her father's regiment, but then our difference in position would even be greater than it was in the present time, so I gave over that idea. At last I summoned up sufficient courage to tell her brother

how happy I should be if he could obtain from her some little object that I might keep as a memento of her. He asked what I should like, and I modestly left it to his discretion. He suggested a lock of hair, to which, as may easily be supposed, I gave a ready consent. I assured him such a gift was more than my wildest imagination could have hoped for; that the possession of such a treasure would make me happy for life.

Bad weather then set in, and I did not see either the sister or brother again for some days. He was exceedingly delicate, and during the rain his mother confined him a prisoner to the cuddy. When I saw him again, he placed in my hand, without saying a word, a small folded paper about the size of a shilling. Anxious to know what it contained, I immediately rushed below, and with some difficulty contrived to open it unseen by anyone—no easy task, as solitude is rare in a midshipman's berth. The paper contained a long, but very thin tress of bright auburn hair, which I knew immediately by its beautiful colour and silky texture to be his sister's.

Never, I believe, was happiness equal to mine at that moment. The same day, I clumsily enough made out of a piece of one of my shirts

a small bag. How grateful was I, at the time, for the foresight of Mrs. Burton, who had placed a housewife of her own manufacture in my sea-chest, which, at that critical moment, supplied me with needle and thread. The bag, when finished, was just large enough to hold the hair in its paper envelope. Out of respect to my treasure, I took particular pains in making the bag, and was not a little proud of it when finished. I then fastened it to a piece of spun-yarn, and placing it round my neck, wore it next my heart with all the respect due to a saintly relic.

The ship arrived at Bombay. On the day of Maria's quitting it I determined to speak to her. It required no little courage, but true love will encounter any risk. An opportunity at length presented itself. She was standing near the gangway, a little behind her family, who were waiting for a boat to take them on shore.

"Thanks, a thousand thanks," I said, "for your kind present. I wear it next my heart, and it shall never leave me."

The girl looked intensely astonished. "I don't understand you," she said aloud.

Her mother, hearing her speak, looked round, and asked what she had said.

"This gentleman," replied Maria hesitatingly, "made some remark, but I did not hear what it was."

"What is it you want, young man?" said her mother haughtily.

I was so taken aback that I could not answer a word, but sneaked sheepishly away. The mother mentioned the circumstance to her husband who immediately reported it to the officer on watch,—the one already described as having been an officer in the navy. He questioned, me on the subject, but I refused to answer him a word, and was in consequence sent to the mast-head as a punishment. The old cat of a mother suspected there was something concealed, and of course was determined to find it out. Before leaving the ship, she told the second officer he would greatly oblige her if he would make inquiries, and let her know the result. He promised he would do so, and the family then went on shore.

That afternoon I heard nothing more on the subject. The next morning, however, when I went on duty, Mr. B., the second officer, called me before him.

"I very much suspect, young gentleman," he began, "that there is something more between you and that young lady than is generally known. Now I want to hear all the particulars; so have the kindness to inform me."

"I shall not give you any information on the subject," I replied; "and as the affair is not in any manner connected with the duties of the ship, you are not justified in demanding it."

"Let me give you warning not to speak to me in that manner, sir," he said, "as I don't choose to put up with it."

"I say again, you are not justified in acting in such a manner," I replied, firing up; "and more than that, in demanding it of me, you have committed an action unworthy of an officer and a gentleman."

"How dare you make use of that language to me?" he said. "Do you know who I am, and who you are? Don't imagine I will allow such a breach of discipline to be committed in any ship in which I am officer. Go to the mast-head, sir, and stop there till the hammocks are piped down in the evening. Do the same to-morrow, and your punishment shall continue till you give me a full reply to the question I asked

you. It's a lucky thing for you," he continued, "that you are not in the navy. If you were, by —— you'd get yourself hung for mutiny in less than a month."

"I am sorry I am not in the navy," I replied mounting the rigging to go to my place of punishment. "Any naval officer would be ashamed to show his face who had been told he had acted in an ungentlemanly manner, at any rate without challenging the person who had insulted him, or would have considered it beneath him to have used his power instead, in the manner you have done with me."

"Possibly, sir," he said, "you intend that as an indirect challenge?"

"You will greatly oblige me by considering it as such," I called out to him, as I continued ascending the rigging.

He made no reply to me for a moment, but turned round and continued walking the deck; when, however, I was half-way up the main-top-mast rigging, he called out,—"Come down, sir."

"I half suspect," he said, when I had reached the deck, "that you are not so great a fool as you look, or you would not have had the cunning to have played the game you have. At any rate I

admit you have succeeded. Not in impressing me that I was not justified in my behaviour, but that I don't choose so great a lie should be believed for one moment,—that I, an officer in His Majesty's service, am capable of using power in punishing any one who has challenged me, without first bringing the subject before a court-martial, or Court of Inquiry as we call it in this service. Now, I'll look over your behaviour this time; but mark well my promise, for by—— I'll keep it. The next time you attempt to offer me a challenge, or in the most remote manner to forget the respect due to me as your superior officer, I'll simply have you tried, and sent before the mast; and for the first offence you commit there, however slight it may be, I'll take good care you are lashed up to the gratings, and have a sound three dozen as a reward. Now, go to your duty, and let me hear nothing more of you."

I obeyed him, and the subject dropped.

Although my quarrel with the second officer put Maria's behaviour somewhat out of my mind for a few days, I was still greatly puzzled how to explain it. The girl's look of surprise was certainly genuine; still, I had received the lock of hair from her, and had it in my possession. However,

at last the mystery was cleared up. Before the ship left Bombay I was allowed one day's holiday on shore, and there, by chance, met Maria's brother. I requested him to tell me how the mistake occurred which was the cause of my making such a fool of myself. I found it was quite true that it was his sister's hair I had been wearing for so many days next my heart, but at the same time she was not aware it was in my possession. During the week her brother had been confined to the cabin by the wet weather, he had taken the opportunity of secretly collecting from his sister's hair-brush the stray hairs, and when he had obtained sufficient had formed them into the tress he had given me. He had thought the possession of it was all I wished for, and how obtained a matter of little importance.

CHAPTER VII.

MY ADVENTURES AT SEA (*continued*).

DURING the passage from England to Bombay the opinion I had formed of the estimable attributes of the East India Company's service gradually vanished, and before the ship again reached England, not only was my conclusion confirmed, but I held it to be impossible that any employment under the heavens could be more objectionable than the one I then followed. The captain of the ship, an elderly man, had certainly many admirable qualities, but unfortunately he was seized with dysentery in Bombay, and after a few days' illness, died. The first officer succeeded to his post, and the officer of my watch, the one of whom I have so frequently spoken, was elevated to the position he had vacated. Our

new captain was in every respect as great a brute as the man who now occupied the place of first officer, and midshipmen as well as men augured badly for the remainder of our voyage.

No sooner had our poor captain been buried than a most detestable scene of brutality, profligacy, and drunkenness, mixed up with the caricature of naval discipline I have already mentioned, reigned on board without the slightest restriction. Flogging was of continual occurrence. If the registers of the old East India Company's ships were to be examined, it would frequently be found that the number of punishments with the cat-o'-nine-tails which took place on board one ship in a voyage of fifteen months were more than those in the whole British navy, in the present time, in the course of one year. Captain L ——, one day in company with some other officers, boasted that he had, during a voyage of little more than a year, flogged every sailor on board his ship. His companions quoted an example of another captain whose discipline was still more admirable (?), who had not only flogged every man on board his ship, but several of them twice over. On board our own ship

these punishments were frequently carried out for the most trifling offences.

One case I particularly remember of a poor fellow who, besides other punishments, had been flogged no less than nine times, and that in spite of the remonstrances of the two surgeons on board, who stated that he was suffering from kleptomania. The faults for which he was punished consisted in continually concealing, either in a bag or trunk, totally valueless objects, such as a piece of iron hoop, spun yarn, little bits of sail-cloth, an iron bolt, and other things of the same kind, which could be of no value to him whatever, but which, unfortunately, came under the head of ship's stores, which are considered sacred at sea. The remonstrances of the surgeons were laughed at, and the captain, backed by the first officer, made, on the occasion of one of these punishments, a long speech, principally remarkable for its bad grammar, in which he stated that he considered it a moral duty to cure the misguided wretch of his pernicious habit. I afterwards heard that a young barrister on board the ship, a passenger from Bombay to Singapore, to which place we were bound, attempted to interfere, but had met with a sharp rebuke for his pains.

On one occasion the miserable man had been condemned to receive three dozen lashes for concealing some useless article, and the ship's crew were summoned to witness the punishment. The barrister at the time was on deck, and as the culprit took off his shirt an expression of horror came over his face at the sight of the still unhealed lashes the sailor had received some ten days before. He made no remark, however, and the flogging commenced, the poor sailor suffering dreadfully under the torture. As soon as it was over, and before being released from the grating to which he was fastened, the prisoner called out, "What a shame it is to treat a poor fellow in this manner? It's infamous!"

The chief officer immediately turned to the captain, and said, "That man ought to have another dozen for his insulting behaviour."

"You are right," said the captain. "Boatswain's mate," he continued, "do your duty."

"Stop!" thundered the young barrister, now coming forward. "I protest against any further punishment being inflicted on that man. By the laws of England the cry of no man in pain is ever taken in evidence against him."

"By the laws of this ship it is different," said

the captain. "You may make a very good judge on shore; but let me advise you not to meddle with what does not concern you, or you will afterwards get into deeper trouble than you will easily get out of."

"I again protest against your continuing the punishment of that man," said the barrister, "on the plea you have given; and as for your threat, I hold it in contempt. Now, hear one from me. In all probability at Singapore we shall find a ship of war, and if so, I will immediately apply to the Governor to request the captain to interfere, and let him take what steps he thinks proper. I say again, you ought to be ashamed of yourself for being as ignorant of the duties of your position as you appear to be. And you men," he continued, addressing the crew, "I shall call you forward as witnesses of the protest I have made to your captain." So saying, he left the deck, and entered his cabin.

Notwithstanding the insolent behaviour of the two bullies, the energetic words of the barrister had evidently a great effect on them. They seemed, however, for some moments puzzled what steps to take. At last the first officer, who was not without some cunning, advised the captain to

call the surgeon and ask whether the man could support the continuance of his punishment. The surgeon, only too happy to give the poor wretch the chance of escaping, pretended to feel his pulse, and then said—

"In my opinion, sir, he cannot support, without danger, any further punishment."

"Take him down," said the captain.

The poor fellow was then released, but suffered a similar punishment three weeks afterwards.

It would be very wrong to state that the sailors in the ship were either overworked or badly fed. In one respect, perhaps, they had too much indulgence allowed them, and that was in the quantity of rum served out to them. In some ships, especially in the navy, trifling faults were frequently punished by stoppage of the prisoner's grog for periods varying from a day to a month. On board our own ship this was never the case, the rope's end, or cat-o'-nine-tails, was the only punishment used. Again, our captain was one of those who gloried in sending the holiday men from other ships who visited our crew back again in a state of helpless drunkenness; and when our own men visited on board

other ships, if they had not to be hoisted on deck by a pulley, from their inability to stand, our captain would remark on the meanness of the entertainment they had received. Drunkenness was also carried on among the liberty men on shore; to such an extent, that it was no uncommon matter in Bombay to find streets, in which the grog shops were principally situated, with half a score of men on the ground, helpless with drink, and a prey to the harpies around them. But in addition to the vice of drunkenness permitted on board the ship, profligacy to an incredible extent was permitted if not encouraged. On this subject a good deal might be said, but it would be unfit for these pages. Anything, however, more degrading to humanity than the scenes which took place on board our own ship when in port, as well as others in the service, it would be difficult for the most perverted imagination to conceive. Nor were the men alone guilty; the behaviour of the majority of the officers was scarcely less creditable. Boy as I was at the time, I well remember the bitter sarcasm developed in my mind when contrasting the words of the sermon I heard the Sunday before leaving England, respecting the manner in which the officers of

ships belonging to our merchant princes gave so favourable an idea of Christianity to the minds of the benighted heathen.

To continue my own narrative. Although not a word more was mentioned as to my conversation with Maria, the anger of the chief officer had evidently not subsided; indeed, it was perceptible in the continued annoyance and insults he offered me. I very much suspect these insults were offered on purpose to provoke me to give an angry reply, so that he might punish me afterwards for my disrespectful conduct. If so, he thoroughly succeeded in his policy; and I believe, if the records of the ship could still be found in the archives of the old East India Company, my name would appear disagreeably frequent in punishments awarded me for impertinence to commanding officers and disobedience of orders. I am sorry to say a good many of these punishments were deserved, but not by any means the whole number recorded against me. I am now fully convinced that his tyranny to me was purposely practised, as the following circumstance may prove, when I narrowly escaped severe punishment. I insert the anecdote the more willingly as it is only jus-

tice to the bully to admit that, with all his faults, he had certainly acquired while in the navy (for I believe no good quality was natural to him) a certain amount of respect for anyone possessed of courage.

One night, when in a hurricane in the China seas, he had the midnight watch, I, of course, acting under him. Something, I forget what, was wrong on one of the quarters, and he ordered me to see to it. At that time the ship was rolling violently and rapidly, and the spanker-boom, which had got adrift, was sweeping alternately across the poop,* so as to render it exceedingly difficult to arrive at the quarter. I stood for a moment waiting for the boom to fall to the other side of the ship, so that I could pass to the quarter, when Mr. B—— came up to me.

"Why don't you obey my order, sir?" he said. "You're afraid, I suspect. You're nothing better than a coward, after all."

Stung to madness by this insult, I turned round and exclaimed,—

* For the information of my non-nautical readers, I may mention that the spanker-boom is the one which runs aft from the lower part of the mizen-mast, horizontally over the poop of the ship.

"You lie; I'm no coward;" and I accompanied my words with so well aimed a blow from the shoulder that he carried the marks on his face for a fortnight afterwards.

He immediately sent for the sergeant-at-arms, and ordered me to be placed under arrest,—not as an officer, confined to my cabin, but with my ankles fixed to an iron bar on deck which prevented my moving.

The next day the hurricane or typhoon had greatly subsided, and the crew were employed in making good the damage which had been done. On the third day I received notice that I was to be tried by a Court of Inquiry for mutiny and assaulting my superior officer. This intelligence gave me great uneasiness, as I remembered the threat the bully had made me, that he would have me, the first opportunity, broken, and sent before the mast. However, there was no alternative—I was a prisoner, and to be tried.

I must say, however, that when I entered the cabin and saw all the officers seated at a table, with the Gospel before the captain for the oath to be administered, the scene made considerable impression on me, as there was an appearance of solemnity about the whole affair I had not

before witnessed in the ship, notwithstanding prayers as a matter of form used to be read every Sunday.

The first officer told his tale truthfully enough, as far as the bare facts were concerned. He acknowledged having called me a coward, as he suspected I was afraid to pass by the boom. "And if not," he added, "I submit he was still to blame for not obeying my order with more alacrity."

Two other witnesses swore to the same facts, and the master-at-arms, who held me in custody, testified to the insulting language I made use of to the first officer when arrested.

I was asked for my defence, and said I had none to make. It was perfectly true, all that had been stated, I said, and that if I again received a similar provocation I should act in the same manner.

"You are making bad worse," said the captain.

"I care not," I said, "what may be the consequence; I say again, that the man who calls me a coward is a liar, and in whatever situation I may be, or at whatever risk, I will say the same thing. As for Mr. B——, I despise and defy him. He may do the worst he can, and when-

ever I meet him I will tell him the same thing." And here I attempted to draw myself up to my full height, and to wither my tormentor with an expression of indignant fury, but unfortunately at the moment I absurdly damaged the heroic effect I wished to produce by bursting into a boyish flood of tears. And this fact enraged me the more, as I feared he would think I was acting in an effeminate manner; and so, by way of counteracting an effect of the kind, I made myself still more ridiculous by venting on him a torrent of insulting defiance, crying myself in the most stupid manner the while. The captain advised me to be quiet, and the master-at-arms, a rough old sailor, kept pushing me with his foot as a hint to hold my tongue. At length I obeyed, and stood sullenly by at the end of the table waiting for the captain to speak.

"If you have anything more to say, I am ready to hear you," he said; "but from the language you have already used, if you take my advice, you would say as little as possible."

"I have nothing more to say," I sulkily remarked.

I was then conducted out of the cabin in charge of the master-at-arms, while the court

deliberated. The first officer, my accuser, left it as well. In about five minutes we were again sent for.

"The sentence of the Court," the captain said, "is that you be disrated, and sent before the mast as a common sailor, and that you receive in addition two dozen lashes for your mutinous conduct."

I can't say I was altogether surprised at this sentence. I made no remark, however, and was on the point of being removed, when the chief officer, to my great surprise, said to the captain,—

"Allow me to say a word, sir. I don't wish in any manner whatever to say anything that may appear to justify mutinous behaviour, as discipline ought always to be maintained at sea, but at the same time I must admit, judging from my own feelings, that the affront I offered was, to the mind of any English sailor, an insupportable one. I therefore trust you will allow me to beg that the sentence be reconsidered and modified."

I was again sent out of the cabin, while they deliberated over the request of the first officer, who this time remained with them.

When called in again, I was informed by the captain that, in consequence of the earnest request of Mr. B., my sentence had been commuted. That I was to retain my position as midshipman, but that every hour from sunrise to sunset, I was to go to the maintop-gallant-mast head and report if anything were in sight. This I did for about three weeks, when we arrived at Canton, and my punishment terminated.

It would be tedious to describe further my personal adventures as midshipman in the East India Company's service. Suffice it to say that shortly after our arrival at Canton, I caught an intermittent fever, which confined me to my hammock. So severe was it that for some time I remained equally poised between life and death, and had it not been for the kindness and skill of the assistant-surgeon, a little Scotchman, I should have succumbed to the attack. Thanks, however, to his attention, as well as the good feeling of my messmates, I managed to hang on during the many weeks which elapsed before the ship left Canton. Then the sea somewhat turned the balance in my favour, and I began slowly to recover, and before we had reached the Cape of Good Hope, I was nearly convalescent.

And now my tyrant again commenced his annoyance, offering me some petty insult every time he cast his eye on me. One day, when I was speaking to the head surgeon, he approached us, and asked the doctor why I did not return to my duty.

"Because I do not consider him sufficiently recovered," replied the doctor.

"I consider he is only shamming, and dishonestly throwing on his messmates an unfair share of duty," said Mr. B.

Here the doctor bridled up, and in very explicit terms told the first officer to mind his own business, that he had no authority over him, and that he would not be dictated to either by him or any other officer in the service.

"If you don't speak to me with more respect," said Mr. B., "you will find I am the stronger of the two here."

"Try it when you please," said the surgeon; "either here or on shore, and the sooner you begin the better."

Although certainly a brave man, the bully thought he would rather not carry on the dispute with the doctor, and left us, telling him as he

went that I was a shuffler, and too lazy to do my duty.

I was so annoyed at this, that the same evening, without asking the consent of the surgeon, I went on duty. Mr. B. took no notice of me, nor did he speak one word to me during the whole of the watch. And here I found the surgeon had spoken but the bare truth when he said I was not strong enough to go on duty, for before the watch was half over, I was scarcely able to stand. I contrived to remain, however, during the whole of the time, but the result was that the next day I was unable to move. I recovered a little, and then a relapse of the fever came on, and I was again confined to my hammock, where I remained till the ship arrived at Gravesend.

As I was utterly useless on board the ship, the captain gave me permission to leave with the Scotch assistant-surgeon if I was able. To my surprise, Mr. B., the first officer, also advised me to leave, and that in the most friendly manner. At first I could not understand his behaviour, but during our passage up the river, the assistant-surgeon explained it to me.

"He knows perfectly well," he said, "that he is liable to an action for despotic conduct," and

more than one case is on record in which juries have given damages in actions of the kind. If your uncle has your interest at heart, he will commence proceedings against him, and you may depend on the evidence of Dr. Thompson and myself."

My passage up the river was on a steamer, which had been, since I was last in England, plying regularly between Gravesend and Billingsgate. As we sailed along I could not help contrasting the different position I was then in to the day on which I joined my ship. I was not embarrassed with luggage on either occasion, but the cause was not the same. On my former journey my sea-chest had already been sent on board, filled to the lid with everything I could require; on my return home, I left my sea-chest on board from the simple fact that there was nothing in it worth carrying away. Everything I had possessed had been either lost, stolen, or destroyed, and the prodigal son on his return to his father could have been scarcely more destitute than myself. Again, the contrast in my appearance then, to what it was now, was equally striking. On the former occasion I presented the appearance of an erect, powerfully-built lad,

with a complexion fair enough to have excited the envy of fully the average of young ladies of my own age. I was now debilitated to such an extent I could hardly walk. My frame stooped, and my complexion was tanned to a deep brown by the elements, combined with the sickly hue of disease. I also remembered the adieux of the denizens of Billingsgate market when I left in all the pride of strength, and began to consider what sort of reception I should receive from them on my return. Bad as it was before, it would doubtless be worse now. Here, however, I was decidedly in error. Though the market was scarcely less crowded than at the time of my departure, and those engaged in it by no means of a better class, not only was no disrespectful expression made use of, but all made room for me as I passed leaning on the little Scotchman's arm; and, judging from their countenances, many evidently sympathized with me on the state of my health. A miserable virago, who, if not the same with whom I commenced my quarrel on leaving England, might have been her twin sister, remarked to another of the same order as I passed, "Poor fellow, there isn't a fortnight's life in him. It's a pity to see a lad of his age so cut down, ain't it?"

Of course I made no remark, and we continued our road further on; but then I began to feel so faint, my companion had to take me to a druggist's shop to get me a restorative. He then asked the druggist if he could recommend us a quiet hotel, and fortunately he was able to tell us of one but a few paces off. Here I remained in bed for a couple of days while my friend the doctor paid some visits to his relatives in London. At the end of that time he asked what further assistance he could render me, as in the course of a few days he should be obliged to leave for Scotland.

My first idea was to send for my friend Burton, and the doctor went to his house, but on arriving there found that he and his parents had left London for the seaside, and they were not expected to return for another three months. It may possibly be thought that I ought first to have appealed to my uncle, but I did not do so from the fact that I felt exceedingly disgusted with him for the indifference he showed me when I left England. However, the contents of my purse were so small that I had not sufficient money to pay my bill at the hotel, and, in spite of my own wishes, I was obliged to ask the doc-

tor to call on my uncle. He did so, and fortunately found him at home. Nay more, he must have given a very serious description of my illness, for, to my great surprise, my uncle returned with him. He met me with (for him) great cordiality, and expressed his sorrow at the condition I was in. Although his words were kind enough, there was a certain coolness of manner about him, which seemed to tell he did not feel all he said. After talking with me for some time, he asked what money I had, and where was my luggage. I told him everything I had was either lost or destroyed, and that I should feel greatly obliged if he would supply me with some money. This he readily did, and then paid my bill at the hotel, and after presenting the little Scotch doctor with five sovereigns, he took me to his lodging.

The first day after my arrival at the lodging, my uncle was courteous and attentive enough; the second, a change took place, and he became more indifferent, and during the next three or four days I saw nothing of him whatever. I had too much pride to seek his society, and remained quietly in my room by myself. At the end of a week he told me he had secured a room for

me in a highly-respectable boarding-house at Hastings, where I could remain till my health was fully re-established, and then we could talk over my future plans.

I willingly agreed to this arrangement, and the next day started off for Hastings, not by any means sorry to leave my uncle's roof.

CHAPTER VIII.

I ENDEAVOUR TO SELECT A PROFESSION.

I REMAINED at Hastings for more than two months. During the time I had not received any news of my uncle, beyond his occasionally sending me money, and this was always done in a most formal manner. At last, comfortable as my life was at Hastings, I could not conceal from myself the fact that I was not justified in idling away my time any longer. I wrote therefore to my uncle to inform him of my wish to return, and talk over with him my plans for the future. I need hardly say that I had given up all idea of continuing longer in the Honourable East India Company's service, but what other profession to adopt I could not determine. I wavered between the army, medicine, and law, the two latter having far greater attractions for

me than the former. Why I should have thought of medicine I hardly know, unless from the frequent conversations I used to have with the little Scotch doctor, who was an enthusiast in his profession. My liking for the bar arose from the fact of my having formed acquaintance with a barrister, who, with his family of two sons and two daughters, had been living for some weeks in the boarding-house with me at Hastings. He had also given me a very pressing invitation to see them when they arrived in London, which I not only accepted, but resolutely determined to keep. I may as well admit here that one of the barrister's daughters had particularly excited my admiration, but as I dare say the reader has had sufficient descriptions of my boyish loves, I will say nothing more on the subject.

My uncle, in his usual laconic manner, wrote word that I could return to London as soon as I pleased, and we could then decide what profession I should enter, as I had set myself irrevocably against commerce.

On the first day after my arrival in London, the subject was not mentioned between us, so I took the opportunity of calling on a friend of the Scotch doctor to inquire when he would be in

town, and to my great satisfaction found he had already returned, and was then at home. He received me in a most friendly manner, and appeared delighted with the improvement I had made in health.

"And now," said the doctor at last, "what are you going to do? I suppose you have no wish to continue in the Honourable East India Company's service, and at any rate you must be labouring under a fit of insanity if you do. There is not one in a thousand with constitution enough to have lived through the illness you have had; but were you to go back again to China, depend upon it you would stay there for ever."

I told him I had no intention to enter the service again in any manner, and that I was undecided whether to adopt law or medicine as a profession.

"Well, then," he replied, "choose medicine. It is certain that our profession is generally a poor one, and that we have a great deal of hard work and little pay. After all perhaps the law is not much better, for although there are in it men in receipt of better incomes than in the medical profession, the majority of its members hardly earn sufficient to find salt for their

porridge, as we say in Scotland. As a doctor, however, a man is always able to find bread and cheese. Let matters come to the worst, he can always get a berth as surgeon on board a whaler, where he will have his five pounds a month, his food, and a cabin. Besides that, you will find far more beauties and attractions in our profession than you would in the law. Were a barrister called on to give one half of his exertions gratuitously, as we are, he would think it, and with reason, a great hardship, but I could give you instances of hundreds in our profession who work half of their time gratuitously, and feel a pleasure in doing so."

"All that is very true," I said. "But you see medicine leads to nothing more, after all. You are a doctor at the beginning, and a doctor at the end of your life; whereas in the law, you may rise to the highest offices in the State, and become a member of the House of Peers. I believe in the medical profession it would be impossible to quote any one who has ever attained even the dignity of being a member of the House of Commons."*

* It should be understood that the conversation above alluded to took place some years prior to the passing of the first Reform Bill. Since that time several very talented members of the House of Commons have been medical men.

I remained in doubt some little time longer what profession to choose, my mind alternating between law and physic. Although I intend keeping to my determination not to trouble the reader further with the detail of any of my boyish loves, I must admit that I held the barrister's daughter in great admiration. She was certainly a very lady-like, pretty girl, and, what pleased me much, dressed neatly, though in admirable taste. In fact, I noticed that dress was almost a passion with her, or rather, that she made a study of it. Nor were her criticisms and animadversions on the subject confined to her own sex, but she would occasionally express her opinion on the dress of gentlemen, who in the course of conversation were brought under her notice. This had the effect, to a certain extent, of making me more particular with my own. So much money, in fact, did I spend upon it, that my uncle, undemonstrative as he generally was, called my attention to the subject. Although his remarks had their weight with me, another circumstance increased their influence, and to such an extent as to drive all boyish foppery out of my head.

A day or two after my uncle's remonstrance I

was engaged to join a picnic in the country, at which the barrister's daughter was to be one of the party. That I might do honour to it, I ordered a new suit of clothes expressly for the occasion. As some delay had occurred before I received my invitation, there were only three days to get the clothes made, and I was obliged to request my tailors, Messrs. Schweitzer and Co., of New Bond Street, to make a suit for me with all possible dispatch. Although they had my measure, I insisted on having it taken again so that there might be no mistake about the fit, which in those days was considered a very serious affair. Gentlemen's dress, instead of being, as it now is, loose and convenient, was made to fit exactly to the body, the arms and legs especially. It is related of that most religious and godly king, George IV., that he was so particular on the subject that when he tried on a coat he would bend his arm, and a tailor's assistant, who stood by armed with a pair of scissors, would cut out all the wrinkles, and the parts were afterwards fine-drawn before his majesty would condescend to wear it. The orders I gave respecting my clothes, if not as minute, were somewhat near it, so particular was I that

they should fit in the tightest manner. They were brought home about half an hour before I had to start for the picnic. The suit consisted of a blue coat with embossed brass buttons, yellow waistcoat, and white duck trousers. The coat, especially the sleeves, fitted to a miracle, and the white trousers were a master-piece, and so closely did they fit that I had some little difficulty in getting them on.

I now started off on foot to the house where a carriage was prepared for some of the party, my flame among them, to go to Hampton Court, the place appointed for the picnic. And here my misery began. So great was it, that although I was placed by her side in the carriage, I believe I never passed two hours of greater torment. The trousers fitted so tightly, it was impossible to sit at ease in whatever position I might take. I tried to put on an air of graceful lassitude, and leant back in the carriage with my legs pushed forward to the fullest extent; but I could not disguise from myself that my figure was constrained in the extreme, and that the perspiration was pouring down my face. An elderly lady, who sat on the other side of the carriage, noticing my expression of countenance, more than once

asked if I were unwell, and added to my confusion by the look of sympathy she gave me. When we left the carriage I received expressions of condolence from several other ladies of the party, but once more in an erect position my inconvenience considerably subsided. The ease I experienced was, however, but of short duration, for lunch was now spread on the green sward, and we were invited to take our seats on the grass. How to accomplish it I knew not. The only comfortable position I could find would be at full length. I tried all I could to sit down, but in vain. I then determined to play the polite and wait on the company; but stooping was painful to me. At last a spiteful young wretch, also an admirer of the barrister's daughter, discovered the cause of my uneasiness, and politely offered me a penknife to make incisions in my trousers, so as to enable me to sit down at ease, but I angrily declined his impertinent offer. I afterwards found that he had told the whole party in confidence the unpleasant position I was in, and the proposition he had made me, and I could notice a titter on their faces, especially of the ladies, every time I came near them. The result was I got intensely

angry, and at a convenient opportunity left the party, and strolling away by myself did not return to them again the whole of the day. I remained in the park till nightfall, and then quitted it and purchased a small pair of scissors at a shop in the town. At length, a fitting opportunity having offered, I followed my mischievous rival's advice, and made longitudinal gashes in different parts of my nether garments so as to allow me to be more at ease, and inasmuch as I could not decently in my then condition appear in any public vehicle, I set off on foot for town, where I fortunately arrived before the break of day, so that my singular appearance was observed by no one.

On reflecting, the next morning, over the adventures of the previous day, I felt exceedingly galled at the idea of the ridiculous appearance I had made; and that, too, in the eyes of the individual on whom I wished to make the deepest impression. I never again visited at the barrister's house, and in fact dropped the acquaintance of the whole family. And this proves that I had but little predilection for the study of law, and that I was only attracted to it by the charms of the barrister's daughter.

Having relinquished all idea of pursuing the law as a profession, I had now to resolve whether to adopt that of medicine. Before definitely deciding on the subject, I determined again to consult my friend the little Scotch doctor. I informed him I had no intention now of adopting the legal profession, and wished to make up my mind fully whether I should take up that of medicine. I felt strongly impelled, I said, to follow his advice, and wished him to give it me candidly.

"Well, my dear fellow," he said, after a minute's reflection, "I think you cannot do better. As I told you before, in the outset of our profession, especially where you are not backed with private means of your own, a young fellow has many difficulties to contend with; and not the least among them is the obligation to keep up a respectable appearance on very scanty means, though at the same time a living may always be gained provided an individual has a fair amount of professional knowledge and respectability of conduct. I myself am devoted to my profession, and would not change it for any other, although, God knows, I have had difficulties enough to contend with in the pursuit of it. I hold that

there is something almost religious in the exercise of the medical profession, and no man who has once entered it, and afterwards quitted it, but carries with him certainly an inkling to return to it, if only to have an opportunity of exercising the doctrine of good works. My countryman, Mungo Park, by the way, was a singular proof of this. He worked hard as a doctor in a poor country district in Scotland. Occasionally, from hard work and little pay he began to feel discontented with his lot, and thought of quitting the profession and taking some other. However, the practice continued to present great attractions to him, and he remained for more than a year undecided on the subject. At last one night, when he had retired to bed fatigued with a very heavy day's work, he had hardly fallen asleep when he was aroused by his old housekeeper who informed him he was wanted to attend a poor woman labouring under the primitive curse, who resided some fifteen miles distant. Mungo Park had no alternative, and saddling himself his pony, he started off across the heath through a drifting fall of snow to the woman's house, fortunately in time to be of use to his poor patient. For this act he received as fee a piece

of dry bread, and a cup of butter-milk, and then again mounting his pony he returned slowly to his own house. This was the ultimate cause of his determining to quit the medical profession. He resolved for the future to lead an easier life, and go in search of the source of the Nile, then, be it understood, a far more difficult labour than in the present day. But his intention to quit the profession was useless, for it clung to him as irresistibly in the hot deserts of Africa as it had done on the moors of Scotland. He could resist no application for medical assistance, and in spite of all his resolution to shake off physic, the love of it continued with him as ardent as ever till his death. And you my boy," continued the Scotch doctor, "if you only get over the drudgery of the beginning, depend upon it the profession will have as many charms for you as for Mungo Park, and at present for myself."

The little doctor spoke with so much enthusiasm that I caught it myself, and determined to become a member of the medical profession. I inquired of him what steps I ought to take.

"I believe," he said, "the most common way is to put yourself as an apprentice to some general practitioner; but I, for one, disapprove of the

system. If you take my advice you will enter yourself as pupil in one of the hospitals, and also in the class of some anatomical and surgical teacher. You will thus obtain a far better knowledge of your profession than by mixing up drugs behind a counter, and instead of spending some years in that occupation, you may learn in a few months a very considerable amount of general scientific knowledge as well as medical and surgical practice. Were I you, that is the course I should follow."

I told him I was much obliged to him for his advice, which I should certainly take, as I was fully aware my uncle would offer no objection. I then asked him what hospital, and what anatomical teacher's class, I should enter.

"Had you been in Edinburgh," he replied, "I could have given you some good information on the subject, but I am not as well up in matters of the kind in London. Nay more, as the time has nearly arrived when I must again leave town, I shall not have leisure to make many inquiries with you about it. I know, however, Dr. Brooks, the great anatomist, who has classes in Marlborough Street. If you like we will go there now, and I will introduce you to him. He

is a very good fellow, and will, I am sure, assist you in every way he can, and advise you which hospital you had better attend, so as to be able to gain the greatest amount of experience and knowledge."

I thanked him for his offer, and we started off for the dwelling of Dr. Brooks, whom we fortunately found at home. I can remember him well now as he came into the room into which we had been ushered. He was a little man, very neatly dressed in black, with knee-breeches and silk stockings, powdered hair, and white cravat. He listened to the description my Scotch friend gave of my qualifications and previous life, and the advice he had given me.

"I think you cannot do better," said Dr. Brooks, "than follow the advice of your friend. I shall be very happy to take you as a pupil in my class, and advise you for convenience sake to enter your name as pupil at the Middlesex Hospital; though, understand me, I by no means claim for it greater facilities for study than either St. George's or the Westminster."

I thanked Dr. Brooks for his advice, and told him I should certainly become his pupil, and inquired when I could enter.

"The course has just begun," he replied, "and you can enter at once if you please. But you must excuse me now, for I have an appointment I must keep, and am already behind time."

"As it is as well to be inured to the disagreeable part of the profession as soon as possible," said my Scotch friend, "have you any objection to my showing your new pupil the Museum and dissecting-room?"

"None in the world," said Dr. Brooks, laughing. "Pray make yourselves at home."

Dr. Brooks now left us, and I was conducted by my friend into the Museum, of which, although there were many curious objects, I understood but little. We then went into the dissecting-room. And here the difference of behaviour of my friend and myself was remarkable. He appeared struck with admiration at the sight which presented itself to our view; while I was struck motionless with horror. There were in the room eight or ten tables, on each of which was spread, in most singular diversity of attitudes, a dead body, and at each, one student at least was engaged, while at some of the tables there were two or three. Nor should the scene be compared with a dissecting-room in the pre-

sent day, for at that time the Anatomy Bill had not been passed, and many of the bodies obtained for dissection had been buried for many months.

My Scotch friend, who had been engaged for some minutes in animated conversation with a gentleman at one of the tables, suddenly turned round, evidently to call my attention to something which especially interested him. Instead of doing so, however, he exclaimed,

"My dear fellow, how pale you are! Why, what is the matter with you?"

"I don't feel very well, and would rather go home," I replied.

He then led me from the room, and calling a hackney coach, conducted me to our lodgings, where he left me.

I shall never forget the horrors of that night. Sleeping or waking, something terrible presented itself to me. And here again, as usual the absurd contrived to mix up in my mind with the terrible. In contrast with the ghastly scene I had witnessed in the dissecting-room, was the ridiculous adventures of a few days before at the picnic. I tossed incessantly on my bed during the whole of the night, which appeared intermin-

able. Morning at last came, and I arose and dressed myself before any of the inmates of the house were awake. I managed to unbolt the doors myself, and wander into the street. And then the thought came across me that I would visit my Scotch friend, and seeing a hackney coach pass me, I hailed it, and told the coachman to drive me to the doctor's address. No one in the house was up, but I insisted on his arousing them. After some time he succeeded, and a half-dressed maid-servant opened the door. I entered the house, and told her to call my friend, and say I must see him immediately. Then going into the sitting-room to await him, the servant unfastened the shutters, and I remember her giving me a singular look as she left the room. I walked to and fro in it in an agitated manner, till my friend entered, when approaching him, I endeavoured to speak, but suddenly found I had forgotten everything I had to say. He looked at me inquisitively for a moment, and then taking my hand, felt my pulse.

"My dear fellow," he said, "you must go home. Stop a moment, I will go with you. I will be back directly," he continued, as he left the room for a few minutes to complete his toilet

and when ready he entered the hackney coach with me.

From that day for many weeks afterwards, I have not the slightest knowledge of what occurred, beyond that I was stricken down by fever, and remained delirious for three weeks.

CHAPTER IX.

I RESIDE WITH A PRIVATE TUTOR.

My Scotch friend attended me through the whole of my fever, and until I had reached a state of convalescence, when he was obliged to leave me, and I was placed under the care of a practitioner in the neighbourhood. Health returned to me but slowly, and it was several months before it was fully restored. During the latter portion of my convalescence I began again to consider what profession I should adopt, but could come to no decision on the subject. The legal profession I had already relinquished; why, I hardly know, unless it was the keen susceptibility of the ridiculous which has haunted me through the whole of my existence. I now looked on the medical profession with abhorrence; not but that

I fully admitted how much we were indebted to its professors, and the many beauties and attractions it contained. Still, the horrible sight of that dissecting-room remained as fresh on my memory as if I were present in it, and I turned from it with loathing and disgust. At last I resolved to wait till I was fully restored to health, and then consult my uncle on the subject, that is to say, if I could induce him to interest himself in it; and this determination I carried out.

When calling on my uncle after a sojourn of some weeks in the country, he complimented me on my restoration to health.

"Your illness," he continued, "has certainly left its traces behind it. You are far thinner and paler than when I last saw you. Now tell me what I can do for you, as I am rather in a hurry this morning."

As when I entered the house there appeared no signs of either bustle or confusion, and my uncle was calmly seated in his chair reading the newspaper, I naturally suspected his being "in a hurry" was simply an excuse to get rid of me. However, I made no remark, but told him I wished to consult him on what profession I had better enter.

"I really cannot advise you on the subject," he said rather testily. "You are now old enough to know best what profession or occupation suits your tastes and idiosyncrasies. You had better decide for yourself on the matter, and when I know what your views are I will assist in carrying them out."

"But uncle," I said somewhat firmly, "I want your opinion. You are my guardian, and I submit I have a right to ask it."

"Well, my dear fellow," he replied, "my opinion is simply this,—you are not old enough, or, at any rate, not settled enough, to make up your mind on the subject. Again, I tell you candidly that for either of the learned professions I do not consider your education is sufficient. What say you to the army?"

"I have thought of that, uncle," I said, "but it would be long before I could get a commission, there being so many names down, I understand, which would cause considerable delay. Besides, I did not know you had any interest in the service."

"Nor have I," said my uncle, rising from his seat. "Now, I tell you what I think you had better do. Wait till you are of age, which will

be in two and a half years, and then you can decide for yourself. In the meantime, I should advise you to reside with some man of education, with whom you could carry on your studies till you are fitted not only to enter any learned profession, but to take any position in society which may be open to you. By that means you will be better able to choose for yourself, and it will relieve me of all reponsibility of deciding for you in your present unsettled state of mind."

I must say I much liked the view my uncle took of the matter, and told him I would adopt it without further hesitation. I asked him with whom I could reside. He hardly knew, he said, unless with a retired Oxford tutor living with his wife at Brighton, with whom he was acquainted. They were in moderate circumstances, and as they had two sons in the army, he thought it very probable they might not object to add a hundred and fifty or two hundred a year to their income.

"If you like the idea," continued my uncle, "I will write to them on the subject."

I readily accepted his offer, and shortly afterwards left the house.

In three days my uncle received a reply from

Dr. Morgan, the tutor alluded to, saying he should be happy to receive me into his house, on the understanding that the agreement should end as soon as either was tired of the other's society, or any other circumstance occurred to make a separation advisable. This my uncle accepted on my part, and the next week I was domiciled in Dr. Morgan's house at Brighton. I found the doctor and his wife a very amiable couple, and we agreed well together. The morning was dedicated to study, and in the afternoon each took his own way till we met at dinner. In this manner eighteen months of the time passed on, when the doctor told me that he and his wife had determined to remove to Paris—would I like to accompany them? I assented without hesitation, and my uncle approving the plan, we started off together for Paris, where the doctor took apartments in the *Quartier Latin.* Our establishment and method of living, though modest and unassuming, was most comfortable. The doctor was an excellent French scholar, and soon formed a circle of acquaintances among the professors of the different schools in the neighbourhood. I had myself already received some instruction in the French language, which

was still fresh on my memory, but not sufficient to make me a very accomplished French scholar. I now put myself under a professor of the language, and read with him an hour daily, till I could converse fluently.

With the different adventures which happened during my sojourn both at Brighton and Paris I will not detain the reader, especially as I do not think any of them would excite the slightest interest in his mind. I wrote several letters to Burton, but for some time received no answer. At first I thought that he was in ill-humour with me for my neglect of him after my return from India. At the same time I was obliged tacitly to admit that he was hardly of a disposition to retain any ill-feeling against me, especially after the frank expressions of regret I had made in my letters. The mystery was, however, at last explained. About a fortnight before I came of age I received a letter from my uncle, enclosing one for my tutor, and another to me from Burton, bearing the Calcutta post-mark. In it he informed me that he had heard of my having sent a message to his house shortly after my return from India, he at the time being in the country. He then received an appointment,

or writership, as it was then called, in the East India Company's civil service, and a month afterwards left London for Calcutta. He told me he should from time to time correspond with me, and begged me to write and inform him what my present occupation and prospects were, as he should always be interested in my welfare, and sincerely trusted we should some day meet again.

My uncle's letter to me was couched in a style far different from his ordinary curt epistles. In the present instance he was rather diffuse than otherwise, addressing me in terms of great consideration and affection. He reminded me that in about a fortnight's time I should be of age, and advised my immediate return to England, as he should like me to audit the account of the receipts and expenditure of my property placed in his hands, with which he hoped I should acknowledge he had acted the part of a just steward. The letter to my tutor was in my uncle's usual short and concise style. In set phraseology he thanked him for the good service he had rendered me, and enclosed a cheque for the last half-year's salary about to become due, informing him of his wish that I should imme-

diately return home. My leave-taking with my tutor and his wife was friendly in the extreme, and that without any affectation or compliment on either side. I had acquired for them an amount of sincere respect and good feeling I had seldom experienced for any of those under whose care I had hitherto been; and I am fully convinced the feeling I entertained towards them was fully reciprocated.

On arriving in England my uncle received me in a much more friendly manner than usual; so warm was it, in fact, as to cause me considerable surprise. Instead of the few cold abrupt sentences in which he was accustomed to address me, nothing could be more affectionate than his manner. He questioned me as to the progress I had made in my studies, and whether I, personally, was satisfied with the attention and instruction I had received from my tutor.

"I should tell you," he continued, "that he writes me word that in point of education you are sufficiently advanced to commence the study of either Law, Physic, or Divinity; that you are as a classical scholar fully equal to the average of young men leaving the Universities, for, although inferior to many, you are

certainly superior to a still greater number. He further mentions you as a fair mathematician, and, for a young Englishman, a remarkably good French scholar; that your accent, if not perfect, is certainly far more so than ninety-nine Englishmen out of a hundred who profess to be acquainted with the language, while your grammar leaves nothing to be desired. Now all this is very encouraging, and I can want nothing more if you yourself are satisfied."

I told my uncle, modestly, that it was a difficult question for me to decide, as I was a bad judge of my own qualifications. At the same time, I must admit, that if it were not all true what my tutor had stated, it was certainly more my own fault than his, for nothing could have been more kind, assiduous, and attentive than he had been to me the whole time I had been with him.

"Well," said my uncle, "that is very satisfactory on both sides. And now let me ask if you have selected the profession you intend to follow?"

"I have not definitely decided," I replied. "I think, however, it will be the law."

"As a solicitor or barrister?" said my uncle.

"As a barrister certainly, I replied."

"Do you intend at once entering the Inns of Court?" he inquired. "And if so, which will you choose?"

"Frankly," I said, "before commencing the study of the law, I should much like to take a holiday, and see a little of the world—that is to say, if you have no objection to offer."

"None at all, my boy," was his reply. "I think the wish perfectly natural. What countries do you particularly desire to visit?"

"Italy especially," I said. "It has always been my wish to visit that country; and now that I have the opportunity I should like to do so. I should also like to see the principal cities of Germany before I return. All French cities, I understand, are like Paris, so I should have little inducement to remain long in France. Altogether I should wish to be absent some six or seven months, and when I return to my own country I shall set steadily to work at the law. I hope you don't consider the proposition an unsatisfactory one."

"Not at all," said my uncle. "I think, on the contrary, you are perfectly right in the course you propose to pursue. It is exactly the sort of

thing I should have done had I been in your place; and indeed, had I thirty years less on my head, it is more than probable I should have offered to accompany you. As it is, I have now little wish to travel, for I feel the infirmities of age rapidly coming on me. To-morrow," he continued, "if you have no objection, I will go with you through the accounts, and if you find them correct, as I trust you will, I shall, the day you come of age, make everything over to you."

Of course I had no objection to offer to the arrangement, and we then separated for the day.

The next morning, when I entered my uncle's sitting-room, I found an ominous number of books, papers, and deeds spread on the table. Possibly my surprise at their number was visible on my countenance, for my uncle said to me,—

"I suppose you are not accustomed to audit accounts?"

"I have had no practice whatever," I said to him, "and, in fact, know nothing about them. However, of this I am certain, that examine them as I may I shall not be more fully convinced of your integrity and good management than I am at the present moment"

"Very complimentary of you, my boy, to say so," he replied. "But that's not my way of doing business. We will go, if you please, *seriatim* through the whole, much as it may bore you; and as the sooner a disagreeable job is begun the sooner it is finished, as no doubt you have often heard before, we will set to work at once."

The audit of the accounts lasted several days. The details I will spare the reader, for certainly nothing could be more monotonous than the work. I candidly believe that every half-crown my uncle had spent during my minority I had to put my initials to, as certifying it was correct. He had invested, he told me, a good deal of my money in the purchase of annuities. Whenever he had £400 or £500 in hand, he purchased with it either an annuity or a reversion, and in case he could find none in the market, sooner than allow my money to lie idle, he had transferred to me one of his own at the price he had given for it. There were also several other investments he had made for me, but which I did not understand. The only remark I made during the time was that I had no idea affairs of the kind could be so complicated, to which he replied, that the good interest they paid was the result of these com-

plications; had all been simple, my income would have been far less.

"At the time your property came into my hands," he continued, "the money was in the Funds, and the whole did not exceed £300 a year, and now your annual income is certainly not less than £500."

I must admit that this intelligence gave me much satisfaction, as I had no idea that I was the owner of so large a sum. My uncle evidently noticed my pleasurable surprise, and addressing me again, said,—

"Do not imagine that I have been ignorant of the suspicion which has always haunted you of my being indifferent to you and your welfare. You have now before you a sufficient proof of the injustice you have done me. However, let bygones be bygones, and I hope for the future you will think better of me than you have hitherto done."

I hardly knew what reply to make him, when, seeing my embarrassment, he relieved me from it by saying,—

"And now, do you intend taking the management of the property into your own hands?"

"I am afraid, uncle, I should hardly be

able to understand how to manage it properly," I replied, "some of the securities seem so complicated; at any rate, until I have made some progress in the law, and am better able to understand their legal nature myself."

"Still," said my uncle, "some one must look after it, especially while you are absent. Who would you like to do so? If you know of no one, I am perfectly willing to do it for you till your return, though, to tell you the truth, I am getting somewhat tired of business."

I told him he would greatly oblige me if he would, and an arrangement was then entered into between us. I was to start on my travels with a hundred pounds in my pocket, and every three months a similar sum was to be forwarded to me to any address I might appoint. The surplus of my income could accumulate till I returned to England, as I should then incur expenses in entering my profession, which that amount would help me to defray. All this met with my perfect approbation, and the day after my coming of age, I started on my journey.

In point of time Italy was then at far greater distance from London than at present. In one respect this was not altogether a loss, for I saw

many interesting towns on my way, which are at present missed by the traveller who makes the journey by rail. I think by the diligence it took me four days and three nights to arrive only at Chalons. From that town I descended the river to Lyons, where I took up my abode at a first-class hotel, resolving to remain there for a week. I had not then determined what route I would take into Italy, whether by Mont Cenis, or through Nice to Genoa. I remained for some days in doubt, each way offering great attractions.

On one occasion at the table-d'hôte I entered into conversation with a French gentleman on the subject, who appeared rather a singular character. He was a man of about thirty-four or forty years of age, tall, well-made, though rather common-looking in the face, and fluent in conversation. In his manners there was a singular contrast. With me, as we became better acquainted, there was a frank *bonhomie* about him that pleased me exceedingly. With strangers he was courteous to excess, at least in his manners, which would have been graceful had they not been exaggerated. They struck me as rather the pantomime of an actor on the stage

playing the part of a nobleman, than those of a gentleman in ordinary life. Possibly this conclusion was arrived at from his being so well versed in theatrical matters. He knew everything connected with the whole of the theatres in Paris, not simply those of the Boulevards, but all the principal operas and theatres—who were their patrons, their best singers and dancers. Although I had occasionally been to the Opera and some of the theatres when residing in Paris, I knew nothing whatever of their management or politics, and listened, therefore, with considerable attention and amusement to the anecdotes with which my new friend regaled the others at table.

Having discovered that he was going into Italy, I ventured to ask him what route he intended to take.

"By Mont Cenis to Turin," was his reply.

"The reason I inquired," I said, "was because I am undecided what route to take myself."

"Well, then, come with me," he said, "I know the road perfectly well, and most of the towns in the north of Italy, especially Turin, Milan, and Venice, and if I can be of the

slightest use to you in showing you the lions, you have but to command me."

I thanked him cordially for his kindness, and the next morning he conducted me to the diligence office, where he took two places in the coupé, and started the same evening for Turin.

CHAPTER X.

MY ADVENTURES IN ITALY.

THE commencement of my journey from Lyons was somewhat uninteresting. In consequence of the darkness there was nothing to attract my attention to the scenery. I conversed, however, with Mr. Lefevre, my new acquaintance, at considerable length. Although a Frenchman, I found he was well acquainted with the manners and customs of England, and spoke the language with tolerable facility. In one respect he had greatly the advantage of me, for he had (in England at any rate) been in a far higher position in society than myself. He questioned me about our own nobility, and whether I was acquainted with them. He frequently spoke of being intimate with Lord Lowther, the Marquis of

Hertford, Lord Sefton, and many others, whom poor I only knew by name, so elevated was the sphere in which he moved above my own. And then again he questioned me as to my own profession. I avoided the subject as much as I possibly could, for I was ashamed to acknowledge the inferiority of the society in which I had hitherto moved, and which I was hardly aware of until that moment. I must say I felt some compunctions of conscience at the meanness of concealing my real position. I told him I had been in the navy (may God forgive me!) and that I had served in the East Indies, but having been seized with a violent illness, I now intended to practise at the bar. He complimented the British navy very highly, adding that although sickness was a good reason for leaving it, he could hardly excuse any other, so many attractions did it appear to possess in his eyes. The bar had also its attractions, he said; there had been Milord Ellenborough, Milord Eldon who were held in high respect, although personally he knew but little of them. He then spoke of other members of the aristocracy whom he had met with, especially officers in the Guards, and asked if I were acquainted with any. I remem-

bered that the colonel of the regiment we had taken from St. Helena to Bombay had formerly been in the Guards, and I said I knew him, although if the strict truth were told, the only conversation that ever passed between us was in his telling me to get out of the way, when, in a heavy shower of rain the soldiers were going below, and for which he received an uncomplimentary reply. Mr. Lefevre did not know the colonel, nor even remember his name, but his having been in India, I thought, might account for that. Two or three times I tried to recollect the name of some lord to quote against the many with whom he was acquainted, but he quite crushed me, however, by telling me of a remark once made to him by His Majesty George IV.

Mr. Lefevre now fell asleep, and I attempted to divine what his profession could be. His language and ideas seemed to be those of a gentleman. He was evidently acquainted with many of our aristocracy, and yet the exaggerated gestures he made use of, especially when addressing ladies, threw me in some doubt as to whether he really was the aristocratical person I imagined him to be. At last I fell asleep myself, nor did I awake till the diligence arrived

at Pont Beauvoisin, the frontier town of Savoy, where we breakfasted, and our luggage was examined. After a delay of two hours, we again entered the diligence, and continued our journey. In a short time the country became more picturesque, and I, who had never been accustomed to mountain scenery, was perfectly delighted with the prospects around me, and enthusiastic indeed were my expressions concerning it to my companion, who fully sympathised with me. Like most Frenchmen, Mr. Lefevre had evidently artistic tastes, and continually pointed out to me delicious little spots, such as bridges, churches, cascades, etc., which I might have missed in contemplating the majestic scenery around. One time, on approaching Grande Chambre, my companion was especially enthusiastic, when we came to a bridge with a waterfall rushing beneath and a tower at the end.

"What a magnificent effect that would make," he said, "with some peasants crossing the bridge, and a soldier in mediæval breast-plate and helmet, standing with halberd in hand near the tower."

So vividly did he describe this that I could almost imagine I saw it, and it struck me at the

time that the word scene he had made use of was very appropriate, as it would have been very well adapted for a theatre.

At St. Jean de Maurienne we dined, and afterwards he proposed we should walk on together and enjoy the scenery while the horses were being harnessed. This we did, and I think I never met with a more agreeable companion than Mr. Lefevre as he appeared that day. All conversation about the aristocracy was dropped, and the scenery and habits of the people were the sole subjects we talked about. We amused ourselves by walking on the bridge, looking at the river, and admiring the beauties around. On our return to the inn, we found the horses had not yet been harnessed, and we proposed strolling onward still the diligence should overtake us, which it did at nearly daybreak, when we entered the coupé, and both, thoroughly tired, fell fast asleep. At Modane my eyes were for the first time delighted with some Italian names over the shops, as well as directions in the road in the same language. Here we merely changed horses, and continued our road to Lanslebourg, where we breakfasted. Feeling greatly refreshed by my meal, I proposed to

Mr. Lefevre that we should traverse the mountain together, by the foot-path, instead of the circuitous route the diligence would take, but he pleaded fatigue, saying that his walk of the evening before had somewhat knocked him up, and he was not as young as I was. I regretted the loss of his society, and started off in company with two or three young Frenchmen who were passengers inside the diligence, and arrived at the Hospice before the cumbrous vehicle had overtaken us. Here we dined, and then continued onwards down the Italian side of the mountain. About midnight we arrived at Turin, where Mr. Lefevre and I took up our quarters at the Pension Suisse.

It was late the next day before I arose, so thoroughly fatigued did I feel from my journey. On descending to the coffee-room I was told that Mr. Lefevre, having some business to attend to, had left the hotel, but that he would return to the table-d'hôte at five o'clock. During the day I occupied myself by roaming about the city, entering churches, noticing shops, as well as the inhabitants. In fact, I was so thoroughly happy in the novelty of the scene around me, that the time passed more rapidly than I had

calculated on. I now attempted to find my way back to the hotel, but in consequence of the rectangular manner in which the streets were built, I had some little difficulty in doing so, till at last I met with a gentleman who could speak French, and he kindly directed me. On entering the hotel I found the dinner had already begun, but that Mr. Lefevre had kept a place for me beside himself. He proposed that afterwards we should go to the café, and have a cigar and chat together over our coffee. To this I willingly agreed. Having selected a table at a café under the arcade of one of the principal streets, Mr. Lefevre asked me, shortly after we had seated ourselves, how I had occupied my time during the day.

"Simply in strolling about the streets, so as to get a general idea of the city, inspecting churches, and the interior of public buildings. And highly pleased I was, I said. I had no idea that Turin was such a magnificent city. I shall know more about it to-morrow though, as I intend to get a guide to take me to the picture-galleries—for I suppose there are some, and other objects worth seeing."

"Do not trouble yourself to get a guide," said

Mr. Lefevre, "for I know Turin well, and shall be happy to go round with you. With the exception of an engagement I have in the afternoon I shall have nothing to do all day. On the following day I shall most probably leave Turin for Milan, and hope I shall be fortunate enough to have you again as my fellow-traveller."

"What makes you leave Turin so early?" I inquired.

"I suspect it will be of little use my remaining here," he replied; "I shall be able to transact more business at Milan."

I had long been anxious to know Mr. Lefevre's occupation, for he puzzled me extremely. That he had been in good society was certain, from the familiar terms he appeared to be on with many of our aristocracy. He was a gentleman also of artistic tastes—of that there could be no doubt. Still I hardly knew how to commence the inquiry, when fortunately he saved me the trouble.

"I wish," he said, "I were like you, travelling solely for pleasure, and able to go wherever the whim or caprice of the moment dictated. Business, however, must be attended to."

"Are you in business?" I inquired, putting

on a tone of surprise, half real, half feigned. "I should hardly have thought it."

He evidently appeared gratified by my remark, and, after making me an exaggerated bow, said,

"Yes, I am. I hardly know how to term my occupation. It is partly business, partly professional, and partly artistic. In fact," he continued, with a burst of confidence, "I am connected with the opera-house in London, where I was formerly ballet-master; and it was in that occupation I made the acquaintance of so many of your aristocracy. Afterwards I relinquished that post on Laporte becoming manager of the theatre, and have since acted as travelling agent for him. My employment now is in selecting talented new dancers for the opening of the theatre in the spring. I selected one or two in Paris; but the stars are so well known, and are so extortionate in their demands, that I made but few engagements there, and thought I might as well come on to Italy, where I suspect I shall find a good deal of talent not very well known, that I shall be able to pick up on favourable terms. And this is the more likely, as I am well acquainted with the north of Italy, having formerly been senior professor of the opera-dancing school at

Milan. You may imagine, then, that I not only know a good dancer when I see her, but can have my eye on others whom I am certain will be stars in their time."

"Have you concluded any engagements in Turin?" I inquired.

"No," he replied, "nor do I think it likely I shall. There is a dancer at the Carlo Felice, I am told, who has made somewhat of a sensation here, and I shall go to-night to see her. She has been trying to persuade me all the morning to make an engagement at once, as she is anxious to appear in London. I'm too old a hand, however, to do anything of the kind; moreover, I do not think she will suit me."

"Why not?" I inquired.

"Well, from her appearance," he said, "she is evidently a dancer of the *Scuola Walmoden.*

"Walmoden?" I said; "I know that name well, but the man I mean was a military officer."

"So he is now," said Lefevre. "He is general of the Austrian troops in Milan. A man enormously wealthy, and a most liberal patron of the ballet. Unfortunately he, and some of his associates nearly as influential as himself, all admire dancers of the robust school, estimat-

ing strength and weight far more highly than grace. "Well, the manager of the theatre, an intimate friend of mine, who of course knows what good dancing is, is greatly vexed at this: but, as I said before, the general is so generous, he does not like to offend him, and the whole of the Austrian party would set themselves against him if he did. Besides that, I heard from the poor fellow I called on this morning that Frasi, the dancer I mentioned, will hardly be likely to please in England or France. However, as I intend seeing her this evening, I shall be able to judge for myself."

"But may not the person who gave you that unfavourable opinion be prejudiced against her?" I said.

"Oh no; of that I am certain," he replied. "I have known him well, poor fellow; in fact, he was a pupil of mine when I was in Milan."

"Why do you say 'poor fellow?'" I inquired.

"Because at present he is in great trouble," he replied. "Indeed when I left his house this morning I felt quite low-spirited. Moreover, I am anxious about him, as he is to make his appearance to-night in a new ballet, and he is

almost broken-hearted. I am afraid his *début* will not be a success. The stage, I can assure you," he continued, "is very deceptive. It frequently happens that an individual whose heart is ready to break is obliged, for his bread, to play the buffoon before an audience who at the time think him the merriest of mortals. It will be somewhat similiar with poor Delorge to-night. He is to play the part of Zephyr in the ballet of 'Psyche.' You may imagine it will be painful work for him to be skipping about the stage in the light and graceful manner necessary for the part, with a heart as heavy as lead in his breast at the time."

"What misfortune has happened to him?" I asked.

"Delorge, although brought up in Italy, is a countryman of mine," he replied. "He is of no great talent, but a very light dancer. He married a young girl, also a dancer, and they manage between them to make a very respectable living. They are a very affectionate couple, and live very happily together. Their family consisted of three children, the eldest a girl about four years of age, the youngest a baby in arms. They have lately been dancing at one of the

small theatres in Milan, the wife's engagement terminating about a month before her husband's. About that time they received the offer of an engagement at Bordeaux; and in case they accepted it, the wife would be obliged to be there at as early a date as possible, but the husband would not be required till six weeks later. They did not like the idea of parting from each other even for so short a time; but being very poor, and their engagement in Milan, from the failure of the manager, having been most unprofitable, they accepted it.

"The wife started off, taking with her hardly sufficient funds for her journey; and the husband was to follow as soon as his engagement terminated, and he had received what little money might be saved from the amount the manager owed him. Shortly after his wife's departure the cholera broke out in Milan, and the theatre, after an unsuccessful attempt on the part of the manager to keep it open, closed, and the poor fellow lost the whole of the money owing to him. This misfortune was the more terrible to him as it rendered it exceedingly difficult for him to join his wife. Prudence in our profession is seldom carried to any great

length, and Delorge is by no means an exception to the general rule. Thanks, however, to the assistance he received from some of his more fortunate professional brethren, and the sale of a portion of his wardrobe, he at last had sufficient money to commence his journey, when premonitory symptoms of cholera appeared in one of his children. Two days later the eldest girl was a corpse, and the second child was attacked by the disease, which also terminated fatally. The poor fellow was now almost beside himself with sorrow; but his cup of misery was not yet full. He had received a letter from his wife, urging him to join her with as little delay as possible, not only on her own account, but that his engagement would be jeopardised should he longer stay away.

"As Delorge was now penniless, he accepted an engagement for a week in Turin, by which he would be in possession of sufficient funds for his journey; but on the moment of starting, another terrible anxiety presented itself. The infant, which had been hastily weaned to allow its mother to proceed on her journey, now began to show symptoms of sinking. Its constitution, never strong, could not bear the shock the

absence of its mother and its natural food occasioned. Still he had no help for it. Turin was on his way, so securing a place in a vetturino, he started off, taking the child with him. It takes two days to perform the journey from Milan here, and although the other passengers showed him every consideration, the infant suffered greatly from fatigue. On arriving at Turin he obtained the opinion of the doctor of the theatre respecting his child's health, who, I suspect, only told him part of the truth. He said there was still a probability, though a remote one, of the child living; all depended on its being able to take nourishment. Somewhat consoled at hearing this, he attempted by all means in his power to get the child to swallow food; but, he tells me, as yet with very little success. I have not the slightest doubt in my mind the child will not live till morning. Poor Delorge is so anxious about it he will allow no one to feed it but himself; and there he sits in his room, the gourd in his hand, the baby on his knee, trying to attract its attention by smiling and talking to it, while the tears are pouring down his face. So you see what strange contrarieties there are in our profession, and the ludicrous often commingled in a very singular manner with the pathetic."

"You intend going to the theatre to-night, do you not?" I enquired. "I should like much to accompany you."

"It will give me much pleasure if you will," said Mr. Lefevre. "Nay more, after the first act of the opera is over, in which the new dancer has a *pas-seul* before the ballet which I wish to see, I will, if you like, take you behind the scenes, and introduce you to a few celebrities in the place."

It would have been impossible for Mr. Lefevre to have made me an offer which I could have liked better. The stage had always great fascination for me, and I was then as completely delighted with theatrical representations as I was when a boy. I seemed to have forgotten the manner in which my illusions were then broken, and the stage, with all its absurdities, had now for me the realism I then considered it possessed. Often had I wished to visit behind the scenes, but having hitherto had few theatrical acquaintances—in fact, none—beyond the stage carpenter, by whom my respect for the talents and fidelity of the Dog of Montargis had been so rudely crushed, I had never had the opportunity. Now, however, I should be able to see all those in whom I was so interested face to face, and converse with

them *in propriâ personâ*, that is to say, with those who could converse in French, for I did not then know three words of Italian.

The time at last came for us to repair to the theatre, and Lefevre, who had received a box in the morning from the manager, took me to it, and I impatiently awaited the rising of the curtain, amusing myself the while by examining the house and its details. It was splendidly designed certainly; but there was a dull, worn look about it which deprived it of a great deal of its beauty. Again, the whole of the theatre being composed of private boxes gave it a depressing effect, which was still further increased by the scanty light shed by the chandelier in the centre.

At length the opera began. It was neither good nor bad, and I entirely forget the subject, so little impression did it make on me, although naturally very fond of music. Possibly this apathy on my part might have been occasioned by Lefevre chattering volubly the while, giving me different anecdotes of the actors and actresses as they came upon the stage, as well as pointing out to me different celebrities in the body of the house. At length the time arrived for the *pas seul*, and Lefevre was now all attention; in fact,

during the whole of the dance he did not utter one word, his eyes being the while critically fixed on the dancer. When she had concluded, he said,

"She will not do. Her knees are bad and she bends them in her *entrechats*. Didn't you notice how clumsily she did them?"

I told him I was but a poor judge of subjects of the kind, though she by no means appeared to me an expert dancer. My reply was truthful enough; at the same time I could not conceal from myself that I thought her a very pretty girl. Moreover, she was favourably received by the audience, though I could perceive no small portion of the applause given her was from a number of young men, evidently her ardent admirers, who occupied some front rows in the pit.

The first act over, Lefevre proposed that we should leave the theatre, and enjoy the fresh air for a few minutes, as the house was intensely hot. I submitted to him whether he did not think it possible the ballet might commence during our absence.

"No fear of that," he replied. "They are far longer here between the different pieces than in

France or England. Moreover Frasi will have to change her dress for the ballet, and that, with her, will take no little time, as she is by no means inclined to hurry herself. Let us sit down at the café here and have an ice. Warning will be given us, before the curtain is drawn up, by a lad sent round with a bell, as a notice for the audience to enter the house."

The ices were now brought, and while we were eating them I asked Lefevre whether he definitely objected to Frasi.

"Not definitely," he replied. "But I think she will not do. As a second-rate dancer she might be worth engaging, as there are some good points about her. To take her at her own valuation would be impossible, as she thinks herself a Montessu at least, and expects to be paid at the same rate. However, we will go behind presently, and then I can have a little conversation with her on the subject, and see what I can make of her."

A boy presently left the theatre, ringing a bell, and Lefevre proposed that we should return to it, which we did by the stage-door at the back of the house. I have already mentioned that the entrance in front of the house as well as

the interior was gloomy; but they were light as day when compared with the entrance at the stage-door. Certainly no manager in Europe could economise oil to a greater extent than it appeared to be in this theatre. So dark was it that Lefevre, who seemed to know the locality perfectly, was obliged to lead me by the hand through many tortuous passages till we reached the wings. These also were in some obscurity, as the oil lamps were all turned upon the stage, which, however, was brilliant enough.

At the moment of our entering, the stage was being cleared for the ballet of "Psyche," the music by Stiebelt, which had lately been revived in Paris. It was singular to notice the respect that many of the dancers paid to Lefevre; while others tried to attract his notice in every possible manner. Presently Frasi, dressed for the part of Psyche, joined the group, and pushed her way forward till she had reached Lefevre, with whom she immediately entered into conversation. She had evidently left her dressing-room in great haste, for a dirty, shabby-looking woman followed her, with needle and thread in her hand, and began to tack down different portions of her dress, for, from the violence of the exertions

made by these ladies, pins are very apt to fall out. Nothing could be more earnest than the attack she made on Lefevre. What she said I did not, of course, understand; but she was evidently speaking to him about the engagement. Presently she said something in a low tone of voice, glancing at me at the time, and I, not wishing to appear indiscreet, left them, and proceeded towards a group of coryphées who had collected round something near the stage. I found the object was a male dancer, whom I judged,—from his dress of a white muslin tunic, with absurd little emerald-coloured wings on his back—must have been Delorge, who was to take the part of Zephyr. As he sat there he presented altogether a mixture of the painful and the grotesque. On his knee was a sickly child, its probable duration of life evidently not exceeding a few hours, whom he was feeding—or rather trying to feed—with milk from a small gourd he held in his hand, fastened over the thin end with a piece of wash-leather. This he attempted to place in the infant's mouth, who turned away its head with a faint sickly cry of annoyance. He endeavoured to soothe it with some endearing motherly expressions, but his attempts were in

vain. He seemed dreadfully distressed at his ill-success, and a tear gathered in the poor fellow's eye and fell, leaving its trace in the stage paint on his cheek.

Suddenly a bell rang, and the orchestra commenced playing the overture. That over, the curtain drew up, and the air of Zephyr, by Stiebelt (so well known in old music books), was played as the cue for Delorge to go on the stage. The poor fellow, occupied with his own thoughts, paid no attention to it, till one of the by-standers recalled him to his senses. He started up hurriedly, and looked wildly around him for a moment. Then placing the infant in the arms of one of the dancing girls who stood near him, he, with a tremendous bound, leaped upon the stage. His appearance was greeted with a loud burst of applause. He could not stop his movements, however, to acknowledge the compliment, but contented himself with attempting to assume an expression of surprise and delight, which made his face to those near him almost ghastly. But another circumstance was noticeable, which increased immensely the contrast between the gay and the painful. In his hurry to go on the stage, Delorge had forgotten to place the gourd

in the custody of some one, and in consequence he was obliged to hold it in his hand the whole time of his dance. It was curious to watch in his different evolutions the tact he used to hide the gourd from the audience, so that in each turn he made, while throwing his arms about, the back of his hand should always be presented to them. But even this solicitude could not keep him from frequently casting his eyes towards the spot where his child was surrounded by the ballet girls. Although he could not see it, its low faint cry reached him, and it evidently went to his heart, for as soon as the dance was over he rushed from the stage, regardless of applause from the audience which called him forward. Lefevre reminded him of the impolicy it would be to offend them, and recognizing the justice of the remark, he went on the stage to make his bow. I never saw the expression on a human being's face change as rapidly and abruptly as his did at the time. A look of violent rage first betrayed itself at the idea of again going forward, which changed to a placid, grateful smile when before the audience, and was succeeded by one of heartfelt sorrow as he

left the stage and caught sight of the infant, the whole not occupying more than a few seconds.

The infant was again placed in his arms, and Frasi came forward, listening to the music for the moment when she was to dart upon the stage. In the interim she looked down at Delorge, and said something encouraging to him which I did not understand, but to which he shook his head mournfully as if she were in error. Then spreading out her skirt, with the assistance of her dresser, she cast another look at poor Zephyr. Then crossing herself reverentially and uttering some short imploration to the Virgin, generally used by dancers in those days to obtain applause, mixed most probably on the present occasion with an unmuttered prayer for the soul of the child so soon to depart, with the conventional dancer's smile on her countenance, she went on the stage.

Two or three times afterwards had Delorge to make his appearance during the ballet, and of course had to give up his child to the custody of one of the girls, but not again did he forget to deliver up the gourd with it. To say the truth, the scene was so painful to me that, much as I had been interested in the stage and its

surroundings, I felt so sick at heart that I left Lefevre and went round to my box in front of the house. When seated there, watching the termination of the ballet, and the gyrations of poor Delorge, with the set smile on his countenance, the idea struck me more forcibly than ever of the hollowness of the stage. At the same time, I now felt an interest in it of which I had been ignorant before. The idea of the sublime and the ridiculous, the gay and the painful, selfishness and charity, all which, during my short visit behind the scenes, I had witnessed, promised me abundant source of amusement and study. I determined, therefore, to become better acquainted with the stage, and that determination I carried out to the full. It has always been to me a source of unfailing amusement and interest, which, even now, as an old man, is not one jot less than at the time when I witnessed the performance of the "Dog of Montargis; or, the Forest of Bondy," and beheld with reverence and respect the crabbed, ill-tempered old woman I, when eight years of age, used to admire when playing the benevolent and majestic Queen at the Surrey Theatre.

CHAPTER XI.

MILAN.

I MET Lefevre at breakfast the next morning, who informed me that he had already called on Delorge, and found the infant had died shortly after the termination of the ballet.

"After all," he said, "it is perhaps better it should be so. To have lived to maturity with its debilitated constitution would have been impossible. It is now, poor thing, at rest, and free from the troubles and miseries which would have awaited it in this world, and the labour and anxiety it would have caused its parents. At the same time, I very much fear for the manner Delorge will get through his task to-night. I cheered him as well as I could, but I shall view his appearance as Zephyr with great anxiety."

Our breakfast over, Lefevre, as he had promised me the day before, kindly became my guide in visiting the different principal monuments, churches, and collection of fine arts, besides other objects of interest in Turin. This occupied us till somewhat late in the afternoon, when after taking our places in the coupé of the diligence to Milan for the next morning, we separated till dinner-time, Lefevre, as stated in the last chapter, having some business of importance to attend to. In the evening we again attended the theatre. As I had great curiosity to know how Delorge would go through his part, I remained in the box while Lefevre went behind the scenes, to see if it would be possible to enter into any satisfactory arrangements with Frasi. Delorge's performance was a singular proof of the duality of the human mind. He danced not only with great vigour, but with great ease, and was abundantly applauded. It was evident to me that throughout he was trying his best to conceal from the audience the real state of his feelings, for while attentive and careful in the performance of his part, I could frequently perceive a change in his countenance from the set

dancer's smile to one of intense momentary pain. Delorge's performance that evening was a complete success, and at the conclusion, Lefevre's remark came vividly before me, that frequently an actor, whom the audience imagined, at the time he was on the stage, to be the happiest of mortals, was carrying within his breast a heart as heavy as lead.

The ballet over, Lefevre returned to the box, and told me he had succeeded in engaging Frasi, and upon one-half the terms she had asked the evening before.

"I don't expect," continued Lefevre, "that she will make any very great success, but she is a pretty girl, and will become a decided favourite with the Omnibus-box, which, you should understand, frequently performs gratuitously the part of the hired *claque* in a French theatre, the principal difference being that in London the spectators in the Omnibus-box are officers in the Guards, or young men of good family and position, while those in the *parterre* of Paris theatres are generally the lowest of the population. Although between ourselves," he continued, confidentially, "I am not altogether

certain whether their applause is not quite as honest as that of the others." *

The next morning, in company with Lefevre, I left Turin. Fortunately we had the whole of the coupé to ourselves. For some time my attention was attracted by the beautiful scenery of the Alps to our left, and the low hills covered with verdure to the right, which gradually subsided into the plains, and it was not till after we had passed Alessandria that any consecutive conversation took place between us. It commenced by my remarking to Lefevre how well Delorge had danced the evening before.

"Yes, poor fellow, he exerted himself wonderfully," said Lefevre; "but he had great difficulty in doing so. I assure you at the beginning of the ballet, before he went on the stage, he was so much depressed I thought he would have broken down. By a violent effort, however, he obtained

* In the palmy days of the Haymarket Italian Opera a long box to the left of the proscenium and on a level with the stage, was called the Omnibus-box, and was principally filled by young men of family and position. For an outsider to obtain a seat in it was as difficult as to gain admittance into White's or Boodle's Clubs. In it originated the Tamburini row, and others of a similar description. To secure the good opinion and patronage of the Omnibus-box was always considered a great point with the managers of the opera.

control over his feelings, and, as you say, succeeded admirably."

"The audience evidently thought so, judging from their applause." I said.

"That of the audience was not the only applause he received," said Lefevre. "All the ballet-girls, standing unseen in the wings, applauded him during his dancing, so that every time he turned, and his eye fell on them, they clapped their hands to keep up his spirits. Even Frasi, notwithstanding the anxiety she was in about her engagement with me, which was not then concluded, had left me, and taken her position among the others, and was as loud in her applause as the rest or even louder."

"After all that is said against them, there appears to be really a great deal of good among them," I remarked.

"There is, indeed," said Lefevre, "and far more so than the casual observer would give them credit for. That their sins are many is perfectly true, but a more charitable community than they are I believe never existed. Notwithstanding all the jealousy and spite which the women of the stage possess to a proverb, they will frequently bestow, even on those to whom they

have been the most spiteful, the greatest kindness, when they are in distress and no longer their rivals. Even in their most depraved condition, specimens of good feeling will occasionally develop themselves in a manner no one would have expected, and that, too, without the individuals themselves being able to account for their conduct. I have met with many examples of the kind."

"I wish you would narrate to me one or two," I said.

"Well," said Lefevre, "there was once a certain Carlotta M——, who was employed some years since, in Monk Mason's time, as a dancer in the ballet. She was as ignorant and uneducated as a low ballerina could be, was very handsome but heavy, and not particularly graceful."

"Of the Scuola Walmoden?" I suggested.

"Exactly," said Lefevre. "I should say that heavy as her body might have been, her character was of the lightest description, and she had many admirers among the patrons of the theatres. One, however, Sir L. S., a man of immense wealth, contrived to engage her entirely for himself, and she ruled over the old blockhead with a

despotism of the most absurd, though rigorous description. Whatever M—— required, he was obliged to get; and I really believe that frequently she used to invent things she did not require, or things she had possibly no taste or use for, merely for the fun of exercising her rule over him. One morning, on going to the theatre for the purpose of getting up a new ballet, I was very much out of spirits, and M—— noticing it, inquired the cause. I told her I had witnessed that morning a scene of great sorrow. In an apartment above me lodged a curate, with his wife and three children, who were in the deepest poverty. I would willingly have relieved them, I said, but they were such a nice amiable family, and of so high a tone, that I did not like to offer them any assistance. 'And why not?' she asked. 'Because I should be afraid of hurting their feelings,' I replied. 'Hurt a person's feelings by giving them anything!' M—— remarked; 'why I never heard of such a thing. I take everything offered to me, and never feel the slightest sorrow in doing so. But neither you nor I need put ourselves to any trouble in this matter. Find out in what way they can be benefited, and I will make Sir L. S. assist them.

They will be under no obligation to either of us, nor to Sir L. S. himself, for he would never do it from any good feeling on his own part.'

"Although," continued Lefevre, "I was somewhat puzzled to see the force of M——'s argument, I made inquiries of the landlady of the house in what manner the poor family could be benefited without hurting their feelings. 'I hardly know,' said the landlady. 'They are very badly off, in fact half-starving, and it is a great injury to me, for they owe me three weeks' rent, and I can ill afford to lose the money,' 'But can you not tell me more about them,' I asked. 'Well the fact is, he came up to town, hoping to get a curacy, but without success; and now, I think, they are at their wits'-end to know what to do.' The next morning, M—— asked me more about them, and whether she could not do something to assist them. 'Nothing at all, I am afraid' I replied. 'Though very poor, I suspect they are also proud. He is a curate, and wishes to obtain some employment, and I don't think, Carina, church matters are much in your way." 'I'm afraid not,' said M——, looking serious. 'However, I'll try what I can do before I give it up,' and we then went on with the rehearsal.

"The next morning when we met, M—— wore a most amiable and pleasing expression on her countenance, 'Caro maestro,' she said, 'I think I have succeeded. I find Sir L. S. has what is called a 'living' in his gift, which is now vacant. Get me the particulars of the poor curate, and I will insist on his aiding him to obtain it.' 'And how will you do that?' I asked, feeling at the same time somewhat nervous at the idea of employing such an agency as M——, in so serious a matter. 'I'll tell him I want it done,' she said, 'and if he won't, I'll quarrel with him. Ah, don't you be afraid, I'll have my own way. I see you doubt me, but it will turn out as I say.' 'Well,' continued Lefevre, 'I did make the inquiries, and having put the whole on paper, gave it to M——. She applied to her old admirer, who treated the application with contempt. She did quarrel with him as she promised to do, and at the end of a few days the old blockhead not only made her several presents, but agreed to give the curate the living. And here the singular portion of M——'s behaviour breaks out. She not only insisted on my keeping secret from the curate by whose agency the living had been obtained, but

on Sir L. S. doing the same, and the curate had not the slightest idea what patronage had been at work in his favour.

"Another singular point exhibited itself in M——'s behaviour," continued Lefevre. "On the very day the curate was inducted into the living, she broke off all acquaintance and connection with her old admirer, nor during her stay in England would she ever renew it, although the offers he made her were of the most lavish description. Now I hold, that there must have been some profound respect for the church and holy things concealed in that woman's mind, without in any possible manner her being able even to explain to herself the motive power which influenced her."

(I may here add that some years since, and long after Sir L. S.'s death, the curate accidentally came under my notice, and I indirectly elicited from him, that he had always been ignorant of the reason Sir L. S. had selected him for the living, no two human beings being more unlikely to have the slightest sympathy existing between them.)

Lefevre also related to me many similar anecdotes, but some of my own, which I shall hereafter bring under the notice of the reader

so strongly resembled them, I will not waste time by describing those he related to me.

Of course travelling by diligence we had but little time to see the different towns through which we passed, much to my regret, as I wished to have stopped at Pavia. However, before leaving Italy, I had an opportunity afforded me of seeing that city. We arrived at Milan in the afternoon of the following day, and took up our abode at Reichmann's Hotel, at that time much frequented by the officers of the Austrian garrison. Before the time for the *table d'hôte* Lefevre conducted me to the Duomo, and two or three other principal objects in the city, and we then returned to the hotel.

Dinner over, Lefevre proposed we should go to the theatre. At that time there were two theatres in Milan, the Cannobiana and the Carcano, the former giving Italian comedy and ballet, the latter only operas. On the evening of our arrival the Carcano was open, and the performance advertised was the first two acts of Bellini's opera of "I Capulletti," and the third by Vaccai. To this theatre we went, and there I had another love-attack, which, though it was one of a very innocent description, had circum-

stances connected with it which remained indelibly fixed on my mind. At first sight I fell desperately in love with the prima donna, if the soprano of that opera really bears the title, though I believe it belongs to the contralto. Juliet was a lovely girl, with a clear beautiful voice, which she managed most artistically. I was on the point of saying that Romeo's love for her was trifling when compared with my own, but the confession would be an absurdity, for the two lovers "hated with a hate known only on the stage." This feeling was evidently occasioned by the animosity of Romeo, who, finding Juliet a far greater favourite with the public than herself, took every opportunity in her power to spite her rival. This was apparent to all, though few seemed to interest themselves in the matter, jealousy of the kind being very common in the theatrical profession. At the same time it made Juliet still more interesting in my eyes, and I believe did her no harm with the public at large.

Lefevre had secured for us the stage-box on a level with the actors, so that we not only saw everything going forward on the stage itself, but in the wings as well. I certainly at first sight was much struck with Juliet, and she evidently

noticed me. In fact, that occult sympathy which is said to exist between lovers, began, I am fully persuaded, to pass between us before the end of the opera. She evidently observed that I admired her, and I felt that she understood my feelings, and was pleased with them. So marked, indeed, was the glance she gave at our box, when, after the opera, she was called on the stage to make her obeisance to the audience, that Lefevre noticed it, and told me, as we quitted the theatre, that I had made a conquest there that evening.

Lefevre, I should remark, paid but little or no attention to the performance. In fact, he seemed as a rule totally unimpressionable to the charms of music, while greatly alive to those of the ballet, and that, be it understood, solely from an artistic point of view, as, from all I could learn, he had formed but few intimacies among its members. This was clearly visible the following evening when we visited the Cannobiana. He was then much interested with the ballet, his eyes never quitting the performance during the whole of the time, unless, perchance, to call my attention to some beauty or defect which was to be seen on the stage. To say the truth, I began to get a little tired of his criticisms. All appeared

to me beautiful and graceful, and it was somewhat annoying to me to have these illusions destroyed. The next evening we again took our box at the Carcano, and Juliet had hardly made her appearance on the stage, when I noticed her eyes turned towards us. The performance went off in as satisfactory a manner as on the former evening, and she evidently noticed me as attentively as before. I may say that during a whole fortnight, on every representation of the opera, I was present in the box, and on each occasion my admiration for the fair Juliet increased. I felt, though without anything more reliable to go upon than the glances she occasionally gave me, that my affections were not without return. At last I mentioned to Lefevre that I should like to be introduced to my fair Juliet. He told me there would be no difficulty in the matter, and took me round to the stage for that purpose. But, alas! a great difficulty arose. Juliet only spoke Italian, and I knew but a few words of that language. Possibly Juliet might have overlooked that circumstance, or kindly have taught me Italian, but with my keen sense of the ridiculous, the idea of making love in a language of which I scarce knew a score of sentences,

seemed to me so absurd that I gave it up altogether, and contented myself with feasting my eyes on her from my box. Night after night found me still in the same place, and each night I admired Juliet more than the previous one. She was tall, thin, pretty and graceful, and her girlish figure contrasted most favourably with that of Romeo, who was evidently expecting soon to be a mother.

Romeo appeared to notice my partiality for Juliet, and by way of annoying her, first attempted to attract my attention from her by what is technically termed "playing" at my box, but finding that fail, she changed her tactics, and adopted a plan which could only have entered the imagination of a vindictive woman, and that woman an Italian actress.

The evening she played off her detestable plot, she appeared to be in particularly good spirits, and she sang with great care and feeling as well as animation. Although I could not then account for it, I afterwards remembered that in her grand air in the second act each time she repeated the words *La tremenda ultrice spada* she gave a particularly significant look at me. All passed off well, however, till the third act, both Romeo

and Juliet being very much applauded. The scene in the mausoleum of the Capulets then opened, and Romeo came on the stage evidently in high spirits, totally contrary to what his feelings should have been on the occasion. He wore his plumed hat even more rakishly than before, and his moustaches and imperial seemed to have acquired between the acts an additional coat of burnt-cork and grease.

The tomb was broken open, and Juliet appeared stretched as a corpse on the grave-stone within it. Romeo then entered into the spirit of the scene, and after singing his adagio extremely well, he sucked the poison from the ring, and casting his hat upon the stage, he rushed towards the apparently inanimate Juliet. Then clasping her head on each side with his hands, he gave her a long and passionate kiss. Juliet, awakened by his embrace, rose from her tombstone, and Romeo in terror sunk upon his knees, as if he had seen her spirit; thus leaving Juliet in full view of the audience.

No sooner did Juliet stand erect, than the treason of which she had been the victim became fully apparent. The audience burst into a loud laugh, and, annoyed as I was, I could not refrain

from joining in it. Poor Juliet, when she received Romeo's kiss, received at the same time an exact *fac-simile* of his moustaches and imperial. No copying machine could have taken them off more perfectly. Her appearance was thoroughly absurd. She was immediately aware of the fact, and of course was dreadfully annoyed. She turned mechanically towards me as if for consolation, and found me laughing too. The poor girl looked reproachfully at me for a moment, and then placing her hands upon her face burst into tears. The audience immediately applauded her greatly, and the performance abruptly terminated.

I went home that night thoroughly annoyed and ashamed. My behaviour appeared to me both unkind and ungentlemanly, and I determined the next night to make amends for my unworthy conduct. I then applauded everything she did, but it was useless, for she did not honour me with a single glance. Three or four successive nights I was in my place, but Juliet was inexorable. For several nights I attended the theatre with no better success, till at last the performances were brought to a close by the premature confinement of Romeo. During my stay in Milan I saw nothing more of Juliet; but some

two years afterwards I met her and her mother walking on the ramparts at Modena. Her mother evidently recognised me, and called Juliet's attention to my presence. Not the slightest change, however, came over her countenance, although no doubt she saw me. As I passed them I took off my hat to her, but she took no notice of my salutation, but, acting admirably, appeared to think it was some one else I was addressing. I met her no more, but my behaviour to poor Juilet has always weighed heavily upon my conscience. Although many of the sins I may have committed of a far graver description have long since been forgotten, my unworthy behaviour that evening to poor Juliet remains as fresh on my mind as at the moment after it occurred.

CHAPTER XII.

MILAN (*continued*).

LEFEVRE remained in Italy for about a month or six weeks. He did not reside in Milan during the whole of the time, but made it his head-quarters, occasionally visiting, for two or three days at a time, at Bergamo, Brescia, Modena, Pavia, and other towns, where he thought it likely he might be able to pick up a talented dancer at a moderate price. When in Milan we remained excellent friends, attending one or other of the theatres every evening, and thanks to his knowledge and experience of the stage, in a very short time I became so completely *au fait* in matters of the kind that, had I thought fit, I was able to act the *impresario* myself. To speak candidly the truth, on more than

one occasion during my residence in Italy did such an idea enter my head, although I never put it in practice. I also admit that I had now lost all wish to commence my study of the law, if, in point of fact, any real wish for it ever existed, for now, when I think coolly over the matter, I believe my determination to adopt the law as a profession arose considerably more from its giving an honourable status in society, than from any real love I bore it.

During my residence in Milan I remained at Reichmann's Hotel; in fact, I took a great liking to many of the guests I met there. Altogether it hardly bore much resemblance to our modern ideas of an hotel, for, although travellers passing through Milan often stopped there, it partook rather more the nature of a club-house for officers in the Austrian service. Of these I formed the acquaintance of many, and a more gentlemanly body of men, or more accomplished, I think I never met with. Among them also were several of my own countrymen, officers holding appointments in (I think) the 7th Regiment of Hungarian Hussars, of which the Duke of Wellington was colonel. Many of them tried to inoculate me with a love for a military life,

but not with any success, beyond the fact that I used to attend with them the rooms of a celebrated fencing master, where I myself, for exercise, took lessons, as the immediate neighbourhood of Milan or its streets when once known, offered but little temptation for walking. I may say without vanity that in a few months I became an expert swordsman—certainly with the sabre, which was the principal weapon studied by the officers in the Austrian service. The use of the sabre was also much affected by the Milanese gentleman; why, at first, I hardly knew, but I afterwards, to my sorrow, found out the cause; it was the weapon principally used in duels, which were then of frequent occurrence between the Milanese gentlemen and the Austrian officers.

Although my time was passed in idleness in Milan, it would have been impossible to call me lazy, for, apart from fencing, which I studied assiduously, I also applied myself earnestly to acquire the Italian language. Tassani, my teacher, was a young law student of Pavia, who had just left the University. He was an amiable, kind-hearted, talented young fellow about my own age. His parents, though highly respectable, were poor, and by way of maintain-

ing himself, as he was too young to obtain any briefs, he gave lessons in the Italian language to several French and English students, all of whom esteemed him very highly. As he gave me two lessons a day, it may easily be imagined I made rapid progress in the language. One circumstance in Tassani's behaviour puzzled me extremely. When he came to give me his lesson he always rushed upstairs into my room with so much celerity that he was generally quite out of breath, and left it again in the same rapid manner. Again, if I met him in the street and attempted to speak to him, he always appeared in a great hurry and excused himself, although when in my room he would converse volubly enough. He seemed shy of receiving any civility at my hand, and frequently as I asked him to dine with me at the *table d'hôte*, on every occasion he refused, always urging some excuse, and this so pertinaciously that I was exceedingly puzzled, for evidently his reasons were invented on the spur of the moment. However, I became tired of continually giving him invitations which were not accepted, so I determined to invite him no more, although my esteem for him in no way diminished.

At last a circumstance occurred in Tassani's behaviour which necessitated my asking for an explanation. One evening when passing the Café Martini, I saw him seated at one of the tables in front of the building in conversation with some Milanese gentlemen. His eye evidently caught mine, but instead of replying to my salutation, he pretended not to see me, and kept his eye fixed on the table, conversing with his friends. This nettled me so much, I determined not to let it pass unnoticed, so advancing towards him, I put my hand on his shoulder, and addressed some casual remark to him in a familiar manner. He appeared somewhat surprised, and even annoyed, and rising from his seat, he said in a courteous tone of voice, "Will you have the kindness to excuse me, as I wish to speak to a friend inside." The others at the table took no notice, and I went away.

The next morning, when Tassani called to give me his lesson, with considerable coolness in my manner, I asked for an explanation of his conduct the day before. He civilly told me that there would have been no occasion for me to have put the question, as he could easily understand I was offended, and that he had intended to explain himself unasked.

"The fact is," he said, "with your light hair and fair complexion, soldierly look, and continually frequenting the society of the Austrian officers, you are set down by the Milanese as holding a commission in their army."

"In what manner would it concern them," I inquired, "even were their conclusion correct? I should have been a member of as honourable a body of gentlemen as any I know."

"Granted," he replied; "for, as far as honourable conduct goes, I admit you to be right. But if you intend remaining any length of time in Milan, you must select either Austrian or Milanese society. There can be no mixture."

"And why not?" I asked.

"Simply because it is impossible to imagine in this world a more deadly hatred existing between two classes of human beings than the Austrians and Milanese. I am very glad you have spoken to me on the subject," he continued, "for now we shall understand each other. I have a great respect for you and your talents, but, as long as you remain in this hotel and associate with Germans, it will be impossible for me to be on terms of friendship with you abroad, much as I esteem you. I will tell you candidly

more than this. The money I receive for the lessons I give you is of great importance to me —more so than you perhaps would imagine—but rather than associate with you when we meet in the streets or public thoroughfares, I would cease my lessons altogether."

Although much surprised at Tassani's language, I could not do otherwise than compliment him on his candour. I told him I should be content with his latent good feeling, under condition that he promised, if we meet in any other town, our friendship might be open and unreserved. To this he agreed, and we commenced the lesson. In the evening I mentioned the circumstance to Lefevre, who seemed by no means surprised at it.

"The fact is, I suspect," he said, "that it is the state of Tassani's finances that has driven him to give you lessons at all in this hotel, for every time he enters it and is seen by any of his acquaintances, a suspicion arises in their minds that he is an Austrian spy."

"But he has never once spoken to me on any political subject," I remarked.

"No matter," said Lefevre. "Less cause than Tassani has given for a suspicion of the kind

has brought on a duel among the Milanese themselves. As I know an immense number of people here in Milan, I will give out to all those who are likely to chatter most at the *spezarias* and cafés, that you are an Englishman, and not in any manner whatever connected with Austria or Austrian politics, that you are a friend of mine, a great admirer of theatres, and only here to amuse yourself. I have no doubt you will then find that any unpleasant feeling, if it has at all arisen, will soon vanish; although you cannot expect to enter into any Milanese society as long as you remain in Reichmann's Hotel."

I should mention that besides the German officers whose acquaintance I had made, I was also on terms of intimacy with two English gentlemen, engineers, residing in Milan. One of them possessed immense silk works in the Pian d'Erba, a lovely spot halfway between the towns of Como and Lecco. Occasionally I visited him there, and anything more beautiful than the scenery it would be impossible for the imagination to conceive. Although an Englishman, he was an excellent Italian scholar; and in the immediate neighbourhood of the silk works resided several wealthy Milanese families by

whom he was much esteemed, so that I had abundant society as well as practice in speaking the Italian language. On one occasion I remained for two months there, and when I returned to Milan I took up my residence in an Italian hotel. Thanks to the acquaintance I had formed in the Pian d'Erba I was not now so completely avoided by the Milanese as before, although I still perceived they looked on me with considerable shyness. Somewhat annoyed at this circumstance I became more intimate than ever with the Austrian officers, and continued in their fencing class, till few among them were better swordsmen than myself. For what earthly purpose, beyond the advantage of exercise, I laboured so hard, I am now unable to divine. I continued my lessons also with Tassani, and the more I saw of him the more I liked him. As he was no longer in danger of meeting any Germans, he now frequently dined with me at the *table d'hôte*, and a strong intimacy sprung up between us.

I will not detain the reader with any account of my first twelve months' residence in Italy; in fact, it would be impossible. The time now seems to me to have passed like a delicious dream

without continuity, and yet hardly any circumstance was connected with it that was not pleasant. During the year I principally resided in Milan, visiting occasionally the surrounding towns. Tassani and myself were by this time warm friends. He also was passionately fond of the theatre, though our tastes as to the particular performances were somewhat different. My delight was in a good opera, and the ballet also afforded me much pleasure. For tragedy or comedy I had less respect, and this arose from several causes. In the first place, the frequent habit of changing the performance, the same piece rarely being played more than two nights in succession, never allowed the actors to identify themselves thoroughly with their parts, and they showed great indifference to learning them by heart. And indeed it would have been difficult for them to have done so, for the *répertoire* of an Italian dramatic company, for merely one season, contained in it such an immense variety of subjects as totally precluded their arriving at perfection in any. The prompter, instead of performing his duties, as in an English theatre, by merely following the actors with the manuscript in his hand, and assisting them when at fault,

positively read the whole piece in advance of them, and that in a sufficiently loud key as to be frequently heard by the whole house. Again, another objectionable feature was the affected, conventional tone in which they spoke, certainly different from real life, which to me, when I began to thoroughly understand the language, had frequently a very ludicrous effect.

What greatly surprised me was that Tassani did not appear to notice these defects, but would listen evening after evening with the greatest delight to the performance. One day I spoke to him on the subject, and informed him of the great superiority of our manner of performing plays in England, where an actor identifies himself in his part with such a manner that you would hardly distinguish his performance from real life.

"As far as your objection goes to the continual change of performance," said Tassani, "and the uncertainty of the actors in their parts without the continual aid of the prompter, I perfectly agree with you. Possibly also you may not be wrong in your conclusion as to the stilted and affected tone of our actors and actresses. Still, with us it is conventionally admitted to be good.

Although I consider it to be absurd, I am now so used to it that I think nothing of it. But are you English," he continued, "free from blame in the matter? I once, a few years since, passed a week in Paris, where there was an English company, and among them I saw some of your celebrated actors. Frankly, they thoroughly disgusted me. I had read several translations of Shakespeare into the Italian language, and indifferent as they might have been, I had conceived an immense respect for the habitual natural language in which they were written, elevated by beautiful ideas and elegant similes, which, if expressed in a natural tone of voice, would have been perfectly delightful. But upon the stage there appeared throughout the whole an exaggerated accent and artificial tone that quite disappointed me. At the same time I noticed that the audience, the English portion at least, seemed to consider it perfectly adapted to the occasion."

Of course, as an Englishman, and with English ideas, I could not agree with Tassani's objections, though I said nothing on the point; but contented myself with asking him why, if he and other educated individuals considered the affected tone used by the tragic actors as

objectionable, they did not attempt to introduce a new fashion.

"You don't know the difficulty there would be in doing anything of the kind," said Tassani, laughing. "I was vain enough some two or three years since to think such a thing possible, and tried to furnish an example, but hardly succeeded in doing so, and I was, moreover, the cause of raising considerable ill-will in my family."

"How was that?" I inquired.

"My father had a brother, a physician," replied Tassani, "who some twenty years ago fell desperately in love with an actress, whom he married, sorely to the discontent of my father, who held that such a union was a *mésalliance.* However, she made him an excellent wife, and things passed off smoothly enough. His wife, of course, quitted the stage on her marriage, but she always continued her love for the old profession, which she entered into with the spirit of an artist. When a boy, she used to assist me in getting up a pasteboard theatre, and aid me with the puppets, I being of course the mouthpiece of all the male actors, and Clelia, the daughter, that of the female. As we grew older, the

performances began to be somewhat more ambitious. We would then play scenes from Alfieri and others of our best writers. Clelia had a remarkably sweet voice, and her mother, who held also that the conventional tone used in our tragedies and comedies was objectionable, taught her to recite her part in a natural manner. Later we put aside the puppets, and played scenes from different pieces, taking the parts themselves. My aunt was always present at the time, combining in her person not only the parts of audience and prompter, but frequently herself reciting portions of the play, when a third character should have been on the stage. I must frankly admit that I was guilty of concealing these performances from my father and mother, who, though passionately fond of theatrical performances themselves, like most other Milanese families of good standing, had but little respect for the performers.

"All went on well till Clelia was about seventeen years of age, when her father died suddenly, and on examining his affairs, he was found to be little better than insolvent; his widow and child, in fact, hardly receiving sufficient to purchase mourning. The question then arose, what was to be done? My father's income, and my expenses at

the University placed it practically out of his power to assist them, except in a most moderate manner, not sufficient for the bare maintenance of life. It was therefore necessary that the widow should do something to maintain herself and child.' But alas! what could she do? She had been but a comedy actress, and was now too old for that, and consequently it would have been useless for her to have returned to her old profession. For some time she remained in doubt which course to take, when Clelia, who dearly loved her mother, asked permission to try her own career on the stage. 'I feel, dear mother, I should succeed if I did,' she said. 'And I should then have the satisfaction of returning, in some part, the affection I have received from you.'

"Her mother," continued Tassani, "would willingly have entertained the idea, but, fearing the displeasure of my father, I was consulted on the occasion. I, enthusiastic for the theatre, advised Clelia to carry out her determination, and her mother also gave her permission. When, however, the subject was brought under my father's notice, he flew into a violent passion, and said that if Clelia was allowed to go on the stage, all further acquaintance should cease

between him and the widow. He also blamed me severely for the part I had taken in the matter, as he had heard I approved of Clelia adopting the stage as a profession; and the result was that a violent quarrel took place between us, the first, and, I am happy to say, the only one, which has ever disturbed the good feeling which should exist between father and son."

"And how has your cousin succeeded?" I asked.

"Not as well as might have been wished," he said. "She has, however, done so sufficiently to encourage her to continue in her profession. She would have succeeded better, in fact, had it not been for the gigantic task she took upon herself of introducing a more natural tone of voice on the stage. Unfortunately she has rather delicate health, and her voice is hardly strong enough to fill a large theatre, so up to the present time she has not had an opportunity of making a thoroughly good *début*."

"Where is she now?" I inquired.

"Somewhere in the south of Italy," he replied. "The last time I heard from her, she was at Rome, and seeking an engagement in some country town. When you go southward

I will give you a letter to her, and then you will be able to judge for yourself whether I have in any manner over-stated her ability and attractions."

Tassani now introduced me to his father and mother; and although they received me with great kindness, I cannot say I found them an amiable couple. On more than one occasion I spent the evening with them, when the conversation, as usual in Milanese society, principally turned on the opera. As an Englishman of course I felt interested in politics, but Tassani's father, with the natural Italian suspicion, declined speaking on a subject which might be likely to implicate him in any manner. On noticing this to Tassani, he told me that I could hardly imagine how trifling a remark would sometimes get an innocent person into trouble, and that his father was already suspected by the Austrian government of being ill-affected towards them. I remarked that no doubt it was a subject of extreme annoyance that the governors of Italy differed from the people not only in nationality, but in modes of thought. At the same time, I said, the Italians appeared to me to have but little to complain of. During the time I had

been in Milan, not one single despotic action had come under my notice, and their laws and regulations could not be so very objectionable, seeing there was not a more flourishing town in Italy, and perhaps in Europe, than Milan.

"It's all very well," said Tassani, "for you Englishmen to speak about the liberty you enjoy here; but because no restrictions are placed on you, it does not follow we are free from them. I tell you that the tyranny of these Austrians is insupportable; and not only that, but their means of exercising it are full of such petty malice that it adds contempt to our hatred. I will give you a specimen of what occurred to me, and hundreds of similar instances might be quoted. In a certain public procession in which the military took part, there was an Austrian colonel of the Lancers whose uniform, absurd enough in itself, fitted him so badly as to excite the laughter of many of the bystanders. I remarked to a friend as the officer passed us that 'he looked more like a *pulcinello* than anything else.' The next morning I had a polite invitation, really worded in a most civil manner, to attend at the police court. I presented myself, and was received by the chief, a Tyrolese, with great courtesy. He

much regretted, he said, having troubled me, but he had received informatiom that I had uttered a disrespectful remark concerning the Austrian army the day before, and he trusted I should be able to prove that the information was erroneous. I candidly admitted the remark I made, but insisted that it related solely to the dress of the officer in question, and that I did not mean any intentional disrespect to the Austrian service. 'Well, I'm very pleased to hear you say so,' he said. 'That is no very great fault certainly. At the same time I must compare your reply with the accusation, and, until that is finished, I am sorry to say I must detain you, but it will only be for a very short time.' I was then removed to a cell in the prison of St. Margharita, where I remained for one fortnight, not allowed even to communicate with my friends or parents, who, as you may naturally suppose, were most anxious at my absence. The chief then sent for me again, and, receiving me with great urbanity, said he was pleased to find my statement had been correct; and, after regretting the inconvenience he had put me to, said he would detain me no longer."

"Do you mean to say that occurrences of that kind are frequent here?" I inquired.

"Not only here," replied Tassani, "but all over Lombardy and Venetia. Such cases might be quoted by hundreds, so you may easily believe the hatred we bear the Austrians is not without provocation."

A few days afterwards a circumstance occurred which gave me an insight into the rigour of the Austrian policy in Italy. I had heard that a copy of the *Times* newspaper might, on payment, be seen in Milan at the Government Gazette office, that journal being prohibited by the police at the *cafés*. I immediately offered to become a subscriber, but they told me they could not accept my subscription without permission from the police, and that if I called the following day no doubt it would be received. I did so, and my subscription being paid, I was conducted down a long passage to a door opening into a room, the whole furniture of which consisted but of a table, an inkstand, and two or three chairs. On the table lay a file of the *Times* newspaper. My conductor told me I could remain as long as I pleased, and when I was tired of reading, if I rang the bell he would open the door and let me out. He then quitted the room, and, locking the door after him, I was left to myself.

Some time later I had a specimen of Austrian rule in Italy, which, in my opinion, was about as infamous and tyrannical an act as could possibly be imagined, and which, after it was over, the Austrian police forbade any mention being made of it in the few non-official journals then published in Italy. In the Piazza d'Armi is a large amphitheatre, open to the sky, built by the first Napoleon, something after the model of the Coliseums of Rome and Verona, though the walls were not so high. A *spectacle* was advertised to be performed in it, called *L'Incendio De Rokeby*, professedly taken from Sir Walter Scott, although there was little in the performance to justify the assertion. The place was crowded with spectators. There was a castle made of painted canvas on a wooden frame in the centre, which was to be defended by one body of actors and attacked by the other. The performance, however was of the most unsatisfactory description—everything went wrong. All the manœuvres were badly performed, the fireworks by which the castle was to be burned down would not explode properly, and the whole affair was a miserable failure. The audience, however, put up with it good-naturedly for some time, but their patience at last gave way.

After expressing their disapprobation in a most emphatic manner, a number of young scapegraces determined, as the castle had not been destroyed, they would do it themselves, and descended into the arena for that purpose, the great mass of spectators—especially the women—quitting the place during the time. Tassani's mother and a female friend having been sitting near me, I conducted them to the door, and, after wishing them good evening, returned to witness the termination of the affair. To my surprise, on entering the *loggione*, in which I had been seated, I saw that the whole of the top circle of the walls had, during my absence, been lined with a row of soldiers. No notice was taken of them, however, by the crowd in the arena, not a tithe of whom were engaged in the destruction of the canvas castle, but merely stood looking laughingly on. Suddenly there was an order given by the commanding officer for the soldiers to fire, who levelled their muskets on the crowd in the arena, and fired a volley at them. The crowd, terror-struck, immediately rushed out of the building, but not before they had received a second volley from the military, who, not being even content with that, turned and fired at the fugitives as

they made their way through the trees that surrounded the arena. How many were killed I know not, but in the arena alone, I certainly saw at least thirty of the spectators who had been shot down, and that for being mixed up in an affair for which a dozen London policemen would not have drawn their truncheons to quell. The next morning the Government Gazette merely noticed that the evening before a slight disturbance had arisen at the arena, but the military having been called in, it was soon and effectually quelled—God knows it was.

CHAPTER XIII.

MILAN (*continued*).

I HAD now no longer any difficulty in admitting that the Milanese had great excuse for their hatred of the Germans, and the more so as I found the Austrians themselves, instead of attributing the occurrence to an unauthorised whim of the officer in command, positively prided themselves on the circumstance; and of this I had good proof in the fencing-room, where I heard the energetic measures taken, mentioned in terms of high approbation. I must, however, do my friends the English officers in the service, the justice to say that they maintained on the subject an ominous silence, neither applauding nor disapproving of it. That they were greatly annoyed and disgusted I am certain—they would

not have been Englishmen had they not been so. This conclusion was confirmed by the short, angry, and snappish replies they gave me, when I mentioned the subject to them. In fact, so irritable did they become about it, that I thought it better to avoid their society for a short time till the affair had blown over. This, however, did not occur as easily as might have been imagined; for, suffering from a full conviction of the infamy of the whole occurrence, I one day some weeks afterwards expressed myself most emphatically and in terms of strong disapprobation of the whole affair in the presence of the Austrian officers. These, in their turn, replied in the same terms, and one especially, Count X——, a totally new-comer, who had not been in Milan at the time of the massacre—for that is the proper term—did so in such a manner that I determined to challenge him, and asked Tassani if he would be my second. He told me he would do so, but begged me most earnestly not to take any steps in the matter if I could possibly help it, as, apart from all other considerations, it would be sure to bring both his father and himself into still more ill-favour with the authorities than they were then in. I did

not like to give up my point, and spoke to my English friend, the engineer, on the subject. He took completely Tassani's view on the matter.

"I think," he said, "that the blockhead, whom you say understands Italian but imperfectly, expressed himself in stronger terms than he might otherwise have done, had he been better acquainted with the language. However, take my advice and let the matter drop, for the present at any rate. If he repeats his insulting behaviour in any manner whatever, then take notice of it if you please, for while I advise you not to be too impetuous in taking up a quarrel for a hot, and perhaps not intended expression, a repetition would mark it as an intentional insult, and I should be the last man in the world to put any impediment in your way."

On thinking over his advice, it appeared to me exceedingly reasonable, and I determined to let the matter drop. I met Count X—— more than once afterwards, who looked at me in a sullen manner, but neither by word nor action could I in any way translate it into an intentional offence.

Although my personal quarrel was at an end, and I had determined on cutting all my Austrian

acquaintances, I found myself in a somewhat embarrassing position with respect to my English friends in that service, who now began to look coldly on me. I believed they had great good feeling towards me, but that it was impossible for them to act otherwise, after the explicit manner in which I had expressed myself relative to the affair at the arena. All things considered, I thought it would be better for me to quit Milan; in fact, I could not disguise from myself that I had already remained there longer than I ought to have done. When I left England, I promised my uncle I should return again in six or seven months, and now I had been fifteen months away, and as yet had hardly seen anything of Italy, more than the towns within a day's journey from Milan. What puzzled me extremely was that my uncle, who, when I left England, had expressed himself in strong terms of affection towards me, had never in his letters made any remark on the subject. He had written once every three months, informing me that he had forwarded to my credit at the Milanese bankers the hundred pounds, but beyond that there was not a single remark in his letter. I now began to suspect that he was indifferent in the matter, and as he

did not choose to write to me fully, I saw no reason why I should be more explicit with him, and so contented myself with merely acknowledging, and thanking him for the money.

Having definitively made up my mind to quit Milan, I informed Tassani of my resolution. He told me that, although he was sorry to lose me, he could hardly blame me for going.

"Beyond that," he said, "why should you waste your time in this dull uninteresting city, where you have met with few intimate friends and acquaintance, and the theatres alone are the only places to afford you amusement?"

Tassani then asked me what city I intended to visit, when I quitted Milan. I told him I thought I should go to Venice, where I should remain for about two months; would he kindly put me in the best way of getting there, so that I might be able to see as much as possible on the road?

"There are several ways of travelling," he replied. "One, by the diligence would be perhaps the most expeditious, as well as an economy both in time and money; but then you will have to travel a great portion of the distance by night, and you would thus omit seeing many

of the most attractive objects in the road. Another way is by the *sedia di posta.* What you have to do is to hire a carriage of the government post-master, who takes you for one post, and every eight or ten miles you have to change carriages, and have your luggage transferred from one to the other, which is very annoying, and at the same time very expensive. If you wish to see really something of Italian life and mode of travelling, I should advise you to go by *vetturino.* Perhaps you have never yet travelled in that way?"

"Never," I replied. "Describe it to me."

"There is very little to describe," replied Tassani. "The *vetturino* is a heavy, clumsily-built carriage, capable of holding six inside, two in the cabriolet in front, besides a little seat for the driver. An immense quantity of luggage can be carried on the roof and on a board behind it. You make a regular agreement with your driver, which is drawn up in a formal manner, stating at what inns you are to stop on the road, in which towns to stay for the night, and what dishes you are to have for breakfast, dinner, and supper. By this means it will take you about four days to arrive in Venice, but you can do it comfortably in that time."

I told Tassani I should feel grateful to him if he would secure me a place in a *vetturino*, and he promised he would do so. Two days afterwards he called on me, and, with an expression of hilarity on his countenance, said,

"I think I have accomplished your commission in a manner which you will like exceedingly, especially with your predilection for the theatre. The day after to-morrow two *vetturini* will leave Milan, belonging to the same owner. One will be filled with dancers for the theatre at Brescia; the other, in which you are to have a seat in the cabriolet, comprises the principal personages of a second-rate opera troop on their way to a minor theatre in Padua. You may if you like—with some stretch of the imagination, certainly—fancy yourself in Assyria, for you will travel with the principal personages in the Court of Semiramis, at least according to the operatic version of it, for your fellow-travellers are all engaged to play in Rossini's masterpiece of *Semiramide*. You will be in the cabriolet with the Ghost of Ninus, a very portly personage, while Assur and his wife, with the baby, will be in the interior, as also will be the tenor, with his wife and baby. The three other places are

filled up by the contralto Grandolfi, whom I have heard you admire so much, the Ghost's wife, and her Assyrian Majesty herself, Semiramide, whom you have not heard, nor do I know her name. So if you have not your fill of theatrical matters before you arrive in Venice, it will hardly be from the fault of your fellow-travellers."

I told Tassani nothing could possibly better meet my views, and that I had now no doubt I should have a very delightful trip.

"Very well, then," he said, "the agreement is drawn up. Here it is,"—and he presented to me a paper holding in it as many clauses as a moderate sized lease and counterpart—"And now," he continued, "you must not fail to be at Signor Zucchi's, the owner of the carriages, by eight o'clock the day after to-morrow, and I will call on you to conduct you to the office."

Having sent on my luggage the evening before, at the time appointed Tassani called for me, and we proceeded together to the dwelling and stables of Signore Zucchi. It was a large rambling sort of house, with a square in the centre, in which were two large lumbering carriages, the roof of one and the board behind

being covered with luggage. On entering the court our ears were assailed by such violent screams that we feared some popular disturbance was in full action, and that I might have another specimen of the Austrian military *régime*. Fortunately I found I was in error. The riot was occasioned by a group of persons somewhat shabbily dressed, all of whom, with the exception of two, were women, screaming and vociferating at the top of their voices. The men standing by were not interfering in the matter in any manner whatever, and Zucchi, the master, seemed to think the better plan would be to let the fire of discord burn itself out, and then all things would settle down comfortably; and as it turned out, he was not far wrong in his conclusion.

On inquiring of Tassani the cause of the disturbance, he told me it was merely a dispute between the singers and dancers—the best of the two carriages having been selected for the opera troop, the shabbier for the dancers. This arrangement had caused great animosity in the breasts of the dancers, who insisted that the better carriage ought to be theirs. Semiramide, however, a very vixenish-looking damsel, told them with great dignity they ought to be ashamed of

themselves for making a claim of the kind, as the opera being a more elevated art than dancing, the singers had a right to the choice.

Zucchi, aided by Tassani and two or three grooms, now interfered and managed to separate the litigants; the opera troop took possession of the carriage which was laden with luggage, and I, seating myself by the Ghost of Ninus in the cabriolet, we drove out of the court-yard, followed by the hisses of the eight female dancers, as well as certain pantomimic gestures neither graceful nor complimentary, while the porters were employed in packing the luggage of the dancers on the roof of the other coach.

Having cleared the gates of the town, the cumbrous vehicle proceeded on its road at the pace of an English funeral coach. Although we were now free from the dancers, the anger of the opera ladies had not yet calmed down, and they continued for perhaps two hours more, all talking together at the top of their voices, about the insolent attempt of the *ballerine* to place themselves on an equality with the singers. Their tongues, however, at last seemed to get tired, and one by one they fell asleep, babies and all. We continued our road onwards till nearly noon,

when we stopped at a roadside inn for breakfast, and to refresh the horses. During our four hours' stay, I managed to get acquainted more or less with the whole of the party, particularly so with the contralto Grandolfi, whom, as I stated, I had already seen in Milan, and a good deal admired. With Semiramide I passed only a few words, her temper not having yet completely subsided after her morning's dispute. The two men I found very good-natured fellows, who seemed somewhat pleased at the opportunity of getting away from their better halves, and we conversed and smoked placidly together. They told me two of the male singers had gone on by diligence, so that their party would not be complete till they reached Padua. We amused ourselves by strolling about, and conversing till the signal was given for us to enter the carriage, and we then continued onwards till evening without anything worthy of remark occurring.

We were called at four o'clock the next morning, and arrived at Brescia about noon, our carriage occasioning as we passed through the streets the gaze of the foot passengers—and not altogether without reason, for seldom had three miserable horses to drag behind them such an

enormous load. On the roof this was especially observable. Not only did the luggage reach some feet above it, but that was raised still higher by the two cradles of the young mothers in the interior. I forget the name of the hotel in Brescia we stopped at, but we were there long enough to give me time to visit the curiosities of the place—the lately discovered ruined temple, a picture collection, and other things. I then returned to the inn in order to be in readiness to start with the others.

On entering the court-yard, a scene almost as singular as that I had witnessed at Zucchi's the morning before met my view, though of a somewhat different description. Then, all were in violent dispute; now, the *ballerine* were expressing themselves in tones of great grief and trouble, while Semiramide and her court were attempting to soothe them with most endearing and loving expressions. On inquiring of the master of the hotel the cause of the hubbub, he told me that on their road that morning, the carriage with the *ballerine* had been stopped by thieves, who had robbed the poor girls of everything they possessed which would sell for a centime, leaving them destitute of money and clothes more than what they stood upright in.

"But you don't mean to tell me that with police as severe as that of Austria, a circumstance of the kind could take place?" I said.

"Well, you see," he replied in an apologetic tone, "this is not a political affair."

"Do they not know where the robbers are to be found?" I asked.

"Perfectly well," he replied; "but they would have some diffculty in getting at them. These fellows are generally deserters from the Austrian army, and make their way up into the mountains, where it's more trouble than profit to follow them. However, these poor girls have lost everything they possessed, and probably will not be able to fulfil their engagement."

"What should hinder them?" I inquired. "The manager finds the stage dresses."

"Not altogether," he said. "Certain things they find themselves—for example, the shoes, head ornaments, and *calze* or *maillots*."

"What will they do now?" I asked.

"Well, you see," he replied, "the opera troop have commenced a subscription, to which I, and some gentlemen who frequent the hotel, have contributed. Semiramide herself is at the head of it, and will doubtless appeal to you."

"And I shall have much pleasure in contributing," I said.

As the master spoke, Semiramide, turning round, saw me, and drawing herself up to a dignified position, and with an amiable smile on her countenance, such as she had not worn since we left Milan, was approaching towards me with graceful and majestic steps, when the contralto pushed somewhat rudely by her, and advancing, asked me if I would contribute.

"I will with great pleasure," I replied, "I hardly know, however, how to do so, for I have very little Italian money with me, but here is an English bank-note for 250 francs (£10) if you can get it changed."

The landlord immediately offered to change it, and the news was conveyed to the dancers by the contralto, who took care to impress on them in a confidential manner that it was through her influence the liberal donation had been obtained, and then she moved aside with a look of modesty on her countenance as if she declined receiving their thanks, while Semiramide stood by, all her expression of sweetness having vanished, while a look, as vindictive as it was possible for a woman to wear, supplied its place. I thought

the affair was finished, but not so. The question arose in what manner the money was to be divided. The dancers, it seemed, had their different grades as well as the singers, and in proportion with that grade they insisted they should be recompensed for their loss. Semiramide offered to arbitrate, but she was immediately snubbed, and that in a very decided manner, and I was then appealed to for my decision in the matter. I was fairly puzzled in what way to act, but the Ghost of Ninus good-naturedly came to my assistance.

"Say," he whispered in my ear, "that as the coach is ready to start, and you cannot entertain the question properly, you will ask the landlord of the inn to distribute the money."

The landlord readily undertook the commission, and this plan seemed to please all, with the exception of Semiramide, who looked even more vixenish than before, and we then entered the coach and continued our road onward.

The liberality of my donation evidently produced a good effect on my fellow-passengers.

The Ghost of Ninus whispered in my ear,

"You did a very kind action there, and God will bless you for it. You, a stranger, have no idea of the desperate poverty of those poor girls.

They would have been little better than in a state of starvation had it not been for the subscription raised for then at the hotel, in which you kindly contributed more than all the others put together. I very much suspect that as soon as the fright they received has subsided, they will find themselves better off than they were before the robbers attacked them."

The window separating the cabriolet from the interior being down, I could also hear my praises chanted in a very audible manner by our fellow-passengers behind us. The voices of Semiramide and the contralto being far louder than the rest, I could not restrain the idea that their remarks were particularly intended for my benefit. This supposition was further confirmed about a quarter of an hour after we left Brescia, and when on a very dusty road, by some one touching me on the shoulder, whom, on turning round, I found to be Semiramide.

"You will be smothered with dust there," she said. "I'm sorry we can't make room for you inside. However, will you accept these grapes; they will serve to keep your mouth moist at any rate?"

So saying, she placed a small bunch of grapes in my hand.

I cannot say the present she offered me was at all a pleasant one, for the grapes were very small, and evidently very sour. I had, however, now been sufficiently long in Italy to have learnt the full force of the Italian proverb, that it's a greater courtesy to accept than to offer, so I took the grapes from her hand, and picking one from the bunch, placed it in my mouth. My suspicion of its acidity was not a vain one, for vinegar itself could not have been more sour, and I took the opportunity of ejecting it as soon as possible, picking off others of the bunch and letting them fall, much to the amusement of the Ghost by my side, who readily understood my feeling. I thought I had performed the feat so cleverly that those in the interior had not seen me, but I was in error, for somebody again touched me through the window on the shoulder. This time it was the contralto, who offered me a box of lozenges, requesting that I would take one, as it would counteract the acid taste of the grapes. I turned round to take one, and in doing so, my eye fell on the countenance of Semiramide, in which there was fully as much metaphorical acidity as in the grapes she had given me. I cannot say the lozenge was particularly appetizing, and I was

not much longer in getting rid of it than I had been of the grapes, much to the delight of the Ghost, who now with difficulty restrained himself from laughing aloud. To say the truth, I had taken a great fancy to the Ghost of Ninus. He was a jolly, good-natured, middle-aged fellow, with a *basso-profondo* voice, of which he was proud, and from time to time as we went on he ejaculated sounds from his throat somewhat similar to those which might be expected from a weak-chested ophicleide player, though with much smaller compass. We now went on smoothly enough till we arrived at Disenzano, where we were to remain for the night.

After retiring for a short time to our respective rooms, we assembled together in a shabby sort of saloon to wait till supper was ready. Here I had again to receive the compliments of the whole party on my liberality. The contralto and Semiramide seemed to vie with each other which should compliment me most, and to avoid any jealousy between them, I appeared to be equally pleased with each, although, to say the truth, I felt far more gratified with those of the contralto, who, as I said before, I somewhat admired. My hesitation in choosing either as a favourite, seemed to to please neither,

and although they addressed each other in most affectionate terms, I could plainly see there was no more love existing between them than there was between Romeo and Juliet at the Carcano theatre.

Supper was announced, and we seated ourselves at the table. The meal was a good one and seemed to refresh us all, not merely our bodies, but our minds as well. All seemed somewhat out of humour before we began; all seemed in high good humour by the time we had finished. We all *seemed*, I repeat, for in the case of the contralto and soprano their animosity was as great as ever, although the manner they complimented each other was still more emphatic. The conversation, as is common among second-rate opera companies, turned on the different theatres at which they had sung, and the various successes or reverses with which they had met. Among other things Semiramide said she was glad that her engagement in Pisa had terminated, as she did not like the theatre, the manager, or the public; the theatre being damp had given her a violent cold, the manager was a rogue, and the public without taste,—in fact, that it had been real purgatory to her while she was there. The contralto remarked with much sympathy in her tone,

"Ah! *cara*, you can't think how much sorrow it gave me to hear of your ill success there; I assure you it went to my heart."

"My ill success!" exclaimed Semiramide. "Why I never made such a *furore* in my life."

"I am very pleased to hear it, and will tell every one I know how erroneous is the report that some malicious people have spread about," replied the contralto. "They even go so far as to say that the manager, though he paid you your last *quartale*, declined allowing you to sing * any longer, as the public would not listen to you. In fact that you made a perfect *fiasco*."

"Don't trouble yourself about it," said Semiramide. "All such remarks I treat with contempt," she continued, showing by her countenance that the contralto had struck home.

Semiramide evidently determined on having her revenge, and shortly afterwards she took it. She imagined that the remark of the contralto, had been to lower her in my eyes, and in her reply she was actuated by a similar motive.

* The salaries of the members of operatic companies in Italy are, or were, paid in advance for their season's services, in four instalments, or *quartales*.

When the conversation turned on the robbers who had attacked the *ballerine*, Semiramide said,

"How thankful we ought to be to the Virgin for having protected us. What would you have done, my dear," she continued, addressing the contralto, "if they had robbed you in the same manner as the *ballerine* I really don't know. Why, you must have forfeited your engagement at Padua, for you would never have been able to have replaced your *calze* and stage dresses here."

I did not at the time understand the sarcasm evidently concealed in Semiramide's remark, but I saw it must be a severe one, for the contralto accused the Assyrian queen of impertinent allusions in choice Milanese terms of disaprobation (and no dialect in Europe has such a choice vocabularly for occasions of the kind) as to cause considerable surprise to us all; and the result was that the supper-party broke up; the ladies retired to their rooms, and fortunately no more was heard of them that evening.

The next morning I inquired of the Ghos what could have been the cause of this ebullition of temper on the part of the contralto.

"Why," said he, laughing, "its only a little bit of theatrical nonsense. The contralto, from

the nature of her parts, has of course to play in men's characters, generally in a tunic; and, between ourselves, her lower limbs are stated to be both ungraceful and as thin as a walking stick, although they appear so round and plump upon the stage."

To my surprise and annoyance I found Semiramide was standing near us, and she burst into a loud laugh.

When we stopped at Verona the next morning, the contralto took the opportunity of telling me confidentially how much she regretted having given way to anger; that she was naturally most sweet tempered, but it was impossible not to be irritated under the remarks of that vixen of a soprano. It struck me at the time that there was very little to choose between the two in point of provocation, but I made no remark on the subject.

CHAPTER XIV.

PADUA.

NOTHING particularly worthy of notice occurred till we reached Padua, beyond that the contralto evidently took every opportunity in her power of making herself agreeable to me, and, to do her justice, she succeeded to a far greater extent than I should have thought it possible when we left Milan. Solely for the satisfaction of witnessing her first appearance, I dismissed my *vetturino*, and took a room in the second-rate hotel which had been selected as the residence of my fellow passengers, and even arranged to take my meals at the same table with them.

The reader must not, however, suppose that because I had conceived a warm sympathy for Grandolfi that I had fallen in love with her, for

such was far from being the case; on the contrary, I could have continued my journey after having seen the curiosities of the city without feeling any regret at leaving her. At the same time I remarked in her, when she laid aside the actress and entered with me into conversation on subjects unconnected with the stage, an amount of kind, impulsive, good womanly feeling that interested me considerably in her favour. And this qualification in her came out into still higher relief when contrasted with the artificial manner she assumed when the conventional language and tone of the actress predominated in her. The more I saw of her the greater did my admiration for her better qualities become. At length an incident occurred a day or two after our arrival in Padua which raised her so highly in my estimation, that even in the present day, after a lapse of some forty years, I frequently think of her, and always with good feeling and respect.

The first two days after my arrival in Padua I spent in visiting the churches, public buildings, and what fine-art collections were worthy of inspection, for I was now too well acquainted with theatrical matters to expect any amusement in the preliminary rehearsals of a second-rate

opera company. Afterwards I attended two or three, and by these was enabled to draw my conclusion as to the success of the company when the theatre would be open to the public. I was singularly correct in the judgment I had formed as to the capabilities of the artists, as was verified on the opening night of the performances,—that the soprano voice was worn out and her acting exaggerated and ungraceful, that Grandolfi had a remarkably fine contralto voice and good ear, but had been trained in a bad school; the "tenor's voice was spoilt by affectation, as for the bass, the beast could only bellow." * The part of the poor Ghost was of such minor importance as to be hardly worth criticism. His voice might have originally been good, but its compass, which had evidently always been restricted, had, as years passed on, become considerably less, till at the time I made his acquaintance he had not above four unexceptionable notes left, and of these he was so proud that he was perpetually introducing them (in a subdued form, it is true) when in conversation on the most ordinary subjects. And let it be understood, the notes

* Byron's "Don Juan."

alone, for they were never combined with any articulated word. When on the stage it was the same thing, not by any chance was a word he had to sing understood by the audience.

. Notwithstanding his mediocre talent, I entertained something very closely allied to respect and friendship for the Ghost of Ninus, for so I am compelled to call him, having forgotten his real name. True, he was an uneducated man, as may be judged, when speaking of Homer's Paris, a character which had been lately introduced into a French burlesque, he remarked, "I was not aware that Paris (Paridi) was a Frenchman," but at the same time there was a gentlemanly honourable tone of feeling about him which might have done credit to the highest nobleman in Italy. His rigid principles of independence were sometimes even inconvenient to me, for in my walks about the city and environs he generally accompanied me, and when fatigued I did not like proposing any refreshment, as on these occasions he would always pay his full share, which I was aware from the miserable stipend he earned he could but ill afford. One evening when rambling with him outside the town, we entered a narrow lane, and there, to my great surprise, I

saw advancing towards us a tall female figure, with apparently an infirm old man, leaning on her arm; and as we approached nearer, to my astonishment I found the former to be no other than my friend Grandolfi. In the dress and bearing of the two there was a remarkable contrast. Grandolfi was erect as a dart, possibly too much so for our modern ideas of female beauty; the old man was exceedingly decrepit, and stooped so much that had it not been for her arm he would probably have fallen. She, if not well, was, after the fashion of Italian actresses, exceedingly showily dressed; his garments were old, threadbare, and ill-fitting in the extreme; and as a climax, Grandolfi's eyes, by far the best feature in her face, were remarkably fine while the old man was blind.

When we met, we stopped and entered into conversation upon the beauty of the evening, and other general subjects, in which the old man took but little part. One point in the contralto's manner, with her decrepit companion, pleased me greatly. Instead of appearing ashamed of the squalid shabbiness of his dress, she paid him great consideration and even kindness, for when I spoke of the beautiful evening tints on the

distant Alps the blind man sighed, and Grandolfi I noticed that when she replied to my remark with her eyes turned fully on me, she patted the hand of the old man as it leant upon her arm, as if to soothe him for the pain he felt in not being able to enjoy the beautiful view I had spoken of. We continued our conversation till the sun had begun to sink, and I then asked Grandolfi if she did not intend to return to the inn. "I cannot at present," she said; "I must first accompany my *Babbo* home." Finding it would not occupy more than a quarter of an hour, the Ghost proposed that we should accompany her. She assented and we went on together, I with no little curiosity to see in what kind of a dwelling Grandolfi's aged relative lived. At length we reached it. Nothing could be plainer or simpler than the cottage and its surroundings. It was all on the ground floor, with a poor garden in which were some vegetables and no flowers. At our approach an elderly shabbily-dressed middle-aged woman came out, and after a really affectionate adieu with Grandolfi, whom her *Babbo* thanked for all the kindness she had shown him, they entered the cottage together, and we three turned our steps towards Padua.

"Poor Nebuchadnezzar (Nabucco) gets very infirm," said the Ghost. "It will be a happy release for all when he goes, for his life must be a misery to himself, and a source of anxiety and trouble to his friends."

"If you are alluding to me among the latter," said Grandolfi, "only one half of your remark is true. The Holy Virgin knows I am anxious enough about him, but as for any trouble to me, he is none whatever. I give him what little I can afford, and the trouble, if any, falls on others, and not myself."

The Ghost made no remark, but emitted his four notes at short intervals, and for the first time I noticed something like expression in them. They seemed to say, "My lass, though you may not know it, you have more trouble than all the others, whoever they may be, put together. Half of your miserable pay, for which you work so hard, goes to support the *Babbo*, while the remainder is barely sufficient for your own food and clothing. If you could afford to eat more, you would require less padding when on the stage, than you use now."

Grandolfi herself even seemed to have some idea of the meaning of the inarticulate sounds

emitted by the Ghost, and complimentary as the former part might be, it was neutralized by the latter. By way of soothing her feelings, I suppose (at least if I was right in my conclusion), she took my arm and leant as heavily on it as Nebuchadnezzer had done on hers. She said nothing, however, not even so far as to make any reply or observation to some remarks the Ghost made to her, and we continued silently on our road till we reached the hotel.

The next morning, after breakfast, I asked the ghost who the old man was whom we had met the morning before, and whether he was really the grandfather of Grandolfi.

"He is no more related to her than you are," was the Ghost's reply, "that is to say, as far as blood relationship goes. Who her relations really were Heaven only knows, for the first that is known of her with any certainty is as a foundling in a hospital. Nabucco, as we call him in fun (his real name is Monti), and his wife had been married some six or seven years, and being then childless, they determined to take a 'God's-child,' or, as you would call it, adopt an orphan girl, and bring it up as their own; and on application to the hospital, Maria Grandolfi, as they call her on the stage, was assigned to them."

"Do you mean to say that any one applying to an orphan or foundling asylum for a child would have one confided to their keeping without the authorities having any further control over them? Things are managed very differently with us in England, I can assure you."

"No child is allowed to be adopted in Italy, at least in the Milanese states, without strict inquiries being made as to the respectability and responsibility of the applicant. Nabucco, who was really a very respectable fellow, had great difficulty before the child was assigned to him and his wife, not that any one hinted a word against them, but as the husband was connected with the theatrical profession, and moreover a dancer, the authorities wished to be certain the girl should not be brought up as an acrobat, tumbler, tightrope-dancer, or any occupation likely to be injurious to her health. However, all inquiries were satisfactorily answered, and the child was made over to Madame Monti, a very excellent woman, but who, after she had been married a few years, was obliged, from an accident she received, to quit the stage, for she also was a dancer. This, of course, was a misfortune, but by way of compensation, Providence blessed

her husband with considerable success; in fact, his salary, after they had adopted the child, was raised to a point quite equal to their joint earnings before his wife's accident, a sure sign that the blessing of Heaven was on them for the act of charity they had performed in taking charge of the orphan or deserted child.

"Monti and his wife had promised the authorities they would bring up the girl with as much care and affection as if she had been their own child, and they faithfully kept their promise. After all, Maria was a very lovable creature, remarkably pretty, with large confiding beautiful eyes, which, now she is a woman, she occasionally uses with good effect. Moreover, she was, although a little high-tempered, exceedingly affectionate and intelligent. They gave her a good education, sending her daily to a school under the direction of some nuns in Milan, and as she had great ability she progressed rapidly with her studies. When she grew older, in fact, when she was between eleven and twelve years of age, they determined on bringing her up as a dancer, but they were soon obliged to abandon the idea. Not only did she lack physical strength, but she grew so rapidly

as to be extremely ungainly, or rather ungraceful, in her movements. For the next three years she remained with Madame Monti, who continued to treat her with great affection, and the girl was also a companion for her during the time her husband was absent on his professional engagements. At length it was discovered that Maria had not only a good contralto voice, but a good ear as well, so she entered as a pupil the singing school attached to the Scala, Monti paying from his salary for private lessons from the best masters as well. The result was, that at last she made her appearance at the little theatre at Pavia, and obtained at least an encouraging amount of success. She is really now a clever artist. Unfortunately, however, few modern operas are written for contralto parts, while there are, perhaps, more women singers in Italy with contralto voices than soprano. The result is, there is great competition among them, so much so that an *impresario* can get one when in want at any trifling sum he chooses to offer her; and they are, as a rule, very badly off.

"But to continue my narrative. The family continued to prosper, satisfactorily at any rate, if not with any very great amount of success.

Monti was an excellent husband, and always showed great kindness and affection for Maria. How she got to call him *Babbo*,* I know not. Perhaps, after all, it is not more incomprehensible than half the terms of endearment common in families. Unalloyed success, however, was not more destined to be the fate of the Monti family than others; and if their lives as yet had been free from any great misfortunes, two at last fell on them, and so heavily as completely to overwhelm them and that, too, at a time when their hopes seemed the brightest. Ricca's opera of *Scarramuccia* had just been produced at Milan, and, from the success it obtained there, it was played also in many other towns, and among these was Lodi. It was here I first formed Maria's acquaintance, she having been engaged to play the part of the Contino, and I that of Tomaso the *buffo*.

"You may well be astonished," he continued, noting an expression of surprise on my features, "that I should have fallen so low as to accept the part of the Ghost of Ninus in a second-rate company; but the fact is that at Lodi I caught

* Grandfather.

a violent cold, and it robbed me of half the notes in my voice. But *pazienza*, a man must live, and better play the ghost than starve, and be a real one,"—this was said as a joke, but with so ghastly an expression of countenance as to spoil the intended effect. "I have this, however, for my consolation, that at Lodi I made a perfect *furore*, and the remembrance of it will always be dear to me to the last hour of my life. But to return to the Grandolfi, she made a sensation scarcely less than my own, and the editor of the Lodi local paper, a cousin of our impresario, augured that in time she might wear the tunic of Brambilla, if not of Pasta herself, in her contralto parts. The manner she sang the air *Oggi quà, oggi quà, domani là*, the evening of the last performance of the season was simply admirable. I wish you could have heard her; you would certainly never have forgotten it."

(I may here state that it was my lot some two years afterwards to hear Grandolfi sing the air, and it has remained impressed deeply on my memory as connected with perhaps the most painful episode in my life, and which I shall narrate at length in a future chapter.)

"It was fortunate for Grandolfi that a letter

which reached Lodi for her the same night was not placed in her hands till the next morning. It was from the master of the house in Milan in which they lodged, stating that her mother (as she called her) was dangerously ill and wished her to return home immediately. Without an hour's delay, the poor girl left Lodi and on arriving at home unhappily found that the description of the danger her mother was in had not been exaggerated by the master of the house; that, in fact, she was suffering from inflammation of the lungs and without the slightest chance of recovery, and two days afterwards the poor woman expired, having received during her last moments the greatest kindness and solicitude from her adopted daughter.

"At the time his wife was seized with her fatal illness, her husband was engaged at Bergamo's, where he was playing the part of Nabucco in the ballet of that name. The poor fellow, when the news of his wife's death reached him was almost broken-hearted. He received the intelligence in the morning, and from that time till evening he did not cease weeping, either seated with his face buried in his hands or walking to and fro in his room, a living picture of despair. At length

the hour arrived for him to prepare for the evening's performance, and he repaired to the theatre where the well-meant condolence of his fellow-dancers rather aggravated his sorrow than alleviated it. I was told that when dressed for his part in the first act, when as a king in all his splendour and magnificently attired, he should have looked, as he generally did, proud and dignified, he was bent almost double with sorrow. In the second, when clad merely in a wild-beast skin, roving insanely about the wilderness, his hair hanging over his shoulders, the effect was not so bad. But here occurred the terrible accident which in the end deprived him of his sight. In accordance with Holy Writ, where it is said the king's nails had grown like a wild beast's claws, he wore netted gloves the colour of his skin, with long claws like nails, made of tin, attached to the tips of the fingers, so as to make his acting as effective and natural as possible. It having been hinted to him that his pantomime was hardly sufficiently energetic in the first act, by way of obviating the defect he overdid it in the second. He rushed about the stage in a state of wild frenzy, and entered so earnestly into his part as to call for the enthusiastic applause of the audience.

In one of these violent bursts, however, in which he endeavoured to conceal his face in his hands, forgetting the tin appendages at the tips of his fingers, he struck his right eye so violently as completely to destroy the sight. So terrible was the anguish he suffered that he rushed wildly about, not knowing what he was doing; while the audience, thinking he was entering with greater energy into his part, increased their applause. At length, unable to endure the anguish, he uttered a piercing cry which rang through the house so acutely that all present, orchestra, audience and all,—were hushed in a moment. Some of the dancers led the poor fellow from the stage, and the performance terminated. But the mischief did not end with the loss of the right eye. The other although not touched began also to be obscured; why I cannot tell you, though the doctors can. And then the veil which seemed to hang over it became thicker and thicker till at last he became stone blind. He, like most others among us, had saved nothing, and he must have existed on charity or died of starvation had it not been for his adopted daughter Maria. God knows her earnings are little enough, for notwithstanding her success at Lodi, she has great

difficulty in getting an engagement, and then is paid hardly enough to maintain one, let alone two. By some means, however, she has continued to do it. He owned the little cottage at Padua you saw yesterday evening (all the wealth he possessed in the world), and she has regularly sent him the second *quartale* of every engagement she gets. A fourth part of her earnings you may be sure is not much, but if you knew how often in Italy the impresarios are unable to pay us the last *quartale*, it is a very liberal allowance for her to give after all."

I thought so too, and I asked the Ghost whether it was enough for the old man to live on. He told me it was barely enough, still he was able to keep body and soul together with it, so things might have been worse. Altogether the Ghost's narrative raised Grandolfi immensely in my estimation. Although I never felt for her anything resembling love, I always liked her, but now that had warmed into respect and admiration. Instead of, as hitherto, being somewhat shy of her society, I now sought it; and utterly indifferent to the sarcasms of Semiramide and the tenor's wife, I generally walked with her in the evening to visit her *Babbo*. "It's quite a treat for him to

hear my voice, she said to me as we were walking home one night, "and it would be cruel in me during my stay in Padua if I did not visit him whenever I have a leisure evening." I was on the point of complimenting her for her kindness to the poor old man, but she followed up her remark by saying, "In one respect it is better he can hear, and not see me." "Why so, I remarked. "Because I was much better looking before he became blind," she continued, turning her eyes full on me, which shone out with great tenderness, lighted up as they were by the lamps of a coffee-house we were passing at the time.

I was so annoyed at this mistimed piece of coquetry on her part, that I abstained from paying her a very pretty compliment which at the moment was on the tip of my tongue, and I said nothing more to her till we reached the hotel, when I parted from her somewhat coolly, she evidently puzzled to knew the cause of my ill-humour.

I saw nothing of her all the next day till the evening, when she asked me if I would accompany her in her walk to her *Babbo's*, as she was afraid to go alone, as the students she said had found out who she was, and paid her so many fulsome and

silly compliments. Now, as timidity was by no means a weakness of Grandolfi's, and moreover, as I well knew, no Italian actress was ever more greedy of compliments, and that is saying a great deal, I easily understood how shallow was her excuse for desiring my company, and I was on the point of refusing her somewhat abruptly, but the idea crossed my mind that I was acting unkindly, so I pretended to feel complimented by her request, and we started off together. On our road, by way of stopping any useless attacks on my heart, which to her at least was impregnable, I conversed with her about her *Babbo*, and, to do her justice, she replied when she spoke of him with so much feeling as to increase if possible the estimation I held her in. She narrated the kindness that she had, when a destitute friendless and even nameless child, received at his hands and that of his wife, and that too at a time when they were but badly off themselves. How they had fed and clothed her, nursed her through sickness, and taught her a profession; and when without an engagement had offered her a home, and always refused to accept any remuneration for their kindness and trouble. I complimented her on her gratitude and the attention she showed to

poor Nabucco. She at first made me no reply but looked at me with an expression of surprise on her countenance, and that without the slightest coquetry in it. "I do not understand you," she said. "You cannot call the little I do for the poor man any act of gratitude or liberality on my part. If I did ten times as much for him as I do, I could never pay a tenth of the kindness I have received from him, and I only wish I could do ten times more for him than I do." I hardly knew what further remark to make to her, especially as she seemed rather hurt at what I had said, and we continued silently onwards till we reached the cottage.

I somewhat dreaded our homeward walk, but as it turned out I had but little cause for alarm, for Grandolfi was, for her, particularly taciturn, speaking but little herself and answering with as few words as possible any remarks I made. And yet there was nothing ill-humoured about her, but was evidently absorbed in her own thoughts. Rather annoyed at her silence I determined to break it, so I judiciously made some remark about the theatre, and the probabilities of Semiramide making the *furore* she expected; as I had imagined, Grandolfi's taciturnity immediately

gave way, and she now conversed volubly enough, ridiculing the idea of the soprano making any sensation whatever ; her voice was thin and weak and useless, she forced it, she could not get it across the orchestra, and then it was shrill and harsh; in fact, what little voice she ever had was completely gone. I inquired whether Semiramide was not very young to have lost her voice. At thirty, singers were generally considered in their prime. "Thirty," almost screamed Grandolfi. "Thirty! *Quaranta colla coda*—forty and more. Is it possible she can have the impudence to call herself thirty ? Why, I remember when I was a chit about eleven years of age, etc.," and so my companion continued on with increasing volubility till we reached the hotel.

My friendship and intimacy with Grandolfi continued to increase, but the line of purely platonic feeling was never for a moment overstepped by either of us, for if at any time she attempted the pathetic or sentimental, it was so palpably fictitious that I joked her on it and it immediately vanished. She made me the confidant of all her prospects and hopes, which were of the loftiest (theatrical) description, but which, as I

learnt afterwards, were, alas! never realised. I made her also a few presents with which she was much pleased, but what delighted her more than anything else was my walking with her on the Corso, one fine Sunday afternoon when the band was playing.

She then indeed appeared in all her glory, dressed in the most glaring colours, and caricatured French fashion, something resembling that which a clown would wear in one of our Christmas pantomimes, when disguised as a lady of fashion. With all my good feeling for Grandolfi, I must frankly admit I was ashamed of the appearance she made on the occasion. There was an absurd affectation of gentility about her as she leant on my arm, occasionally looking round at the company, as proud of the conquest she had made of the young Englishman. In fact, her vanity and self-sufficiency on the occasion was so great as to render her utterly blind to the sneers of those whom she met, and deaf to the satirical remarks spectators made on her behaviour and appearance. More than once I was on the point of proposing to her that we should return home; but when I glanced at her face, and marked the expression of perfect

content and happiness marked on it, I summoned up sufficient courage to support a little longer the infliction, and made no remark on her absurd behaviour. On one point I must admit I felt great satisfaction—Semiramide was not there. She was suffering from a violent headache, occasioned the day before by a quarrel with the leader of the orchestra for not supporting with his band in some of her weaker passages, and was obliged to remain at home. However, the longest day will have an end, and the day in question was no exception to the rule, although Grandolfi persisted in remaining so late, that I believe we were the last couple left on the Corso, and thankful indeed was I when we reached home.

At length the day for the first public representation arrived, and great indeed was the excitement in the hotel, from the prima-donnas to the assistant lamplighter, as to what would be the result, for there seemed great doubt on the success of the soprano. She did not even appear certain on the point herself, great as was her self-conceit; not that she ever expressed a doubt on the subject, but from her incessantly complaining of the draughts of air in the hotel and

theatre affecting her voice, although the weather was extremely sultry without a breath of air stirring. I must say I was anxious about the result myself, rather from the interest I had in the Grandolfi than any other cause. I was also anxious to know what were her abilities as a singer, as well as the quality of her voice, of which beyond its being contralto I knew little. All this I probably might have learnt by attending the rehearsals, but this, after the two following our arrival, I abstained from doing, disgusted with the incessant quarrelling and bickerings which habitually take place on these occasions with second-rate opera companies. However, I was soon now to have my curiosity satisfied, and any doubts I may have had as to her capabilities cleared up.

For some hours after the morning's rehearsal, I saw nothing of my companions, for they had all stretched themselves on their beds, to be in full force for their evening's exertions. I had secured for myself one of the best boxes in the house on the grand tier, and about the third from the proscenium. In it, by bribing the *custode*, I had placed in readiness a bouquet of enormous size, so as to have it in readiness,

should the success of Grandolfi warrant a compliment of the kind; and then, as far as my own convenience was concerned, having all in readiness, I amused myself in the cafés and wandering about the town till it was time for the performance to commence. Long before the curtain drew up, the pit was crowded, the majority of those present being university students; the upper boxes were also full and to excess, as may be imagined when the price of each box nightly, to hold six, was less than three shillings English. Some Austrian officers of the garrison occupied several of the boxes on the same tier as myself, while those on the pit tier were in great part filled by the smaller tradesmen in the vicinity of the theatre. The general aspect of the house was gloomy, being lit from one very small oil chandelier in the centre; but even this had its advantages, for it kept the house all the cooler, and also concealed to a great degree the shabbiness of the fittings.

The orchestra, which was a very fair one, having played the overture, the performance began. I will not detain the reader with any lengthened criticism on its merits and defects; suffice it to say, it was a qualified success and

would have been a decided *fiasco* had it not been for the singing of the Grandolfi. True, even her voice and style were occasionally open to objection. The former it is true was powerful, but at the same time coarse, and her style was unrefined. The tenor was neither good nor bad, and his audience with strict justice neither applauded nor hissed him. The bass had formerly been a good artist, but his voice was worn out. The Ghost excited no applause, nor did he expect it; the few notes, however, he had to sing were given creditably enough. During the performance I had a singular proof of the tact even second-rate Italian actresses will display in creating a party in their favour, when performing in provincial towns. Semiramide it appeared had contrived to make herself friends with the Austrian officers, by giving out that her mother had been a native of Vienna, married to an Italian, and in consequence all the university students in Padua had determined to form a cabal against her, and drive her from the stage. The result, as she expected, was that the garrison officers determined to support her, and had taken boxes in the principal tier for that purpose. At these boxes she sang during the whole per-

formance, and that too in the most marked manner, and was vociferously applauded by them in return, while from the pit she did not get a hand. Grandolfi with equal tact, as soon as she understood the tactics of her rival, sang directly at the students in the pit, and nowhere else. In fact, so pertinaciously did she do so that I firmly believe she even did not on one single occasion cast her eyes round the house to see where I was. She would hardly have seen me, however, had she done so, as I kept myself at the back of the box during the whole performance. The result, however, of her singing at the students in the pit was discernible. Loudly as the officers applauded Semiramide who by the way sang very badly, their applause was a whisper when compared with the shouts the students bestowed on Grandolfi. They positively thundered their applause, while the officers in the boxes remained silent and motionless.

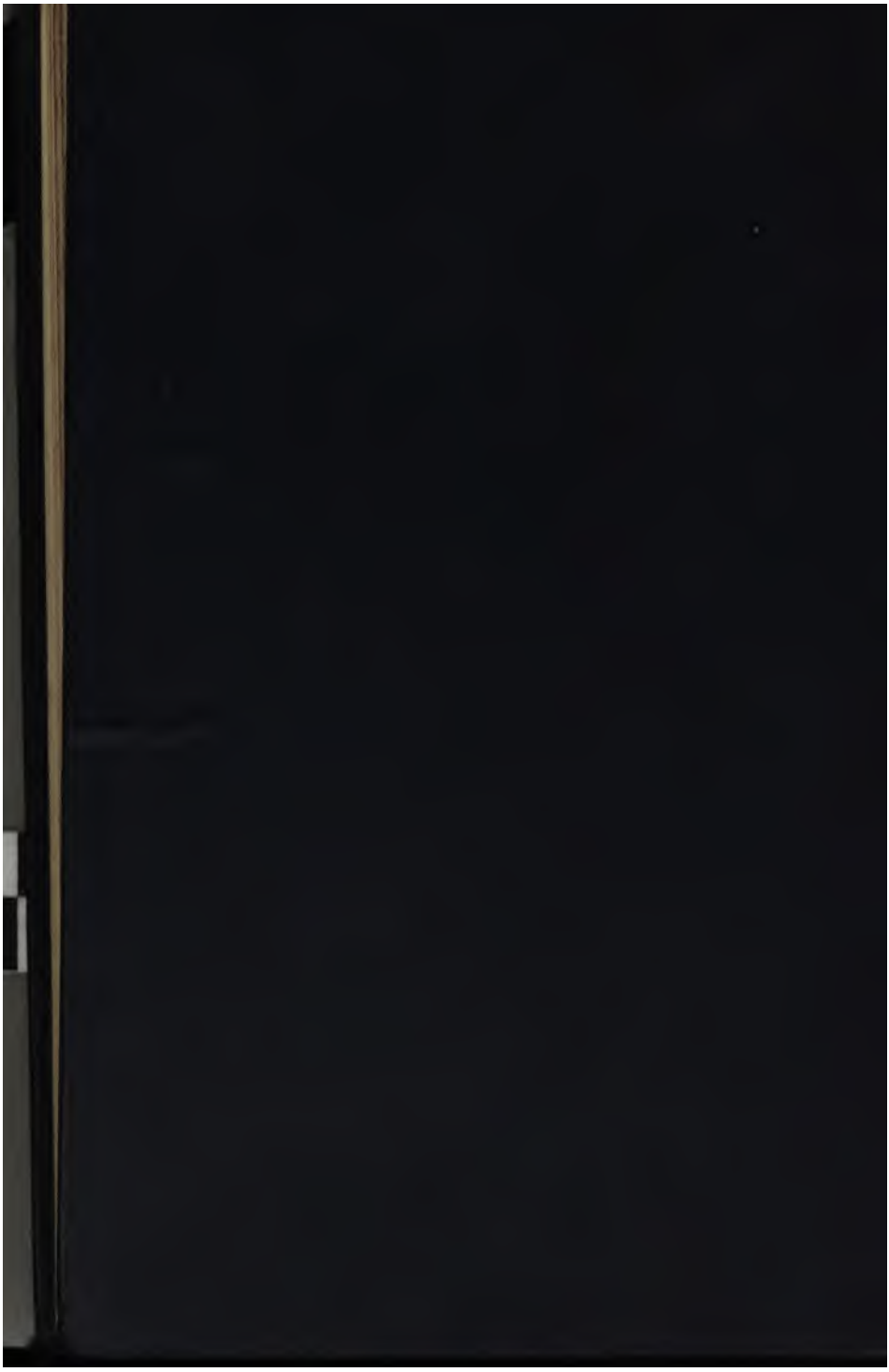
At length the performance came to an end, and the curtain fell. The ceremony of calling forward the artists now took place, and the German officers were loud in their demands for Semiramide (I forget her theatrical name), who

after a modest delay answered it. She appeared overwhelmed with gratitude at the honour the military conferred on her, and endeavoured to express the feeling on her features. At the risk of being thought hypercritical, I may say she did not succeed, earnest as her endeavours were. She caricatured the expression rather than displayed it naturally, and her pantomimic curtsies were grossly exaggerated. During the approbation and applause showered by the Austrians on Semiramide, the students in the pit maintained an absolute silence, but as soon as the prima-donna had quitted the stage, they rose as one man and shouted for Grandolfi. The customary momentary delay having passed, she made her appearance, and the students rose as one man to receive her. She of course was pantomimically overwhelmed with gratitude, and bowed her acknowledgment to the students in the pit, not once raising her eyes to the boxes. As she was leaving the stage I bent forward and threw her my bouquet. She had not seen it, but her attention was called to it by the prompter, and she returned for it, unconscious who had been the donor. By way of repairing her ignorance

of the donor, she cast a grateful glance round the house and pressing the bouquet to her breast left the stage.

I now left the theatre, but before proceeding to my hotel I entered a café, crowded with students, to ascertain, if possible, their opinion of the performance. This, however, was a somewhat difficult task. All were talking at the same time, each student impressively explaining his opinion to his neighbour, who in his turn was equally energetic in declaring his own. At length I got tired of the noise and confusion around me, and I left the café to return home. No sooner did I enter the doors, however, than my ears were greeted with an uproar, compared with which the chattering of the students sank into insignificance, two female voices predominating over the others. I inquired of one of the waiters the cause of the uproar. He informed me that it arose from a dispute between Grandolfi and Semiramide, which should possess the bouquet, the latter insisting it was intended for her, which the other indignantly denied. Fearing that I might be called upon to decide between them, I hurriedly left the hotel and strolled about the streets for more than an hour.

When I returned I found the place perfectly quiet, most of the inmates having retired for the night. I asked the waiter how the dispute respecting the bouquet had terminated. He told me that each lady had attempted to carry it off as her own and the result was it had been torn in pieces.

END OF VOL. I.

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